

SAMUEL CLARKE'S
SCRIPTURE-DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY
and
THE CONTROVERSY IT AROUSED.

by

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INTRODUCTION

The writing of a book may be a dangerous thing. This was found to be true by Samuel Clarke, philosopher and divine of the Church of England during the last part of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries.

Clarke had been studying intensively on the subject of the Trinity, and at last he arrived at some conclusions which he thought would help others to come more readily to an understanding of this vital doctrine of the Christian faith. These conclusions he published in 1712, in a book called The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity and the reception it received was comparable only with that offered by water to a piece of red hot metal, submerged for cooling purposes.

Trinitarian controversy was not a new thing in England: as late as the end of the seventeenth century, there had been such a controversy with Bishop George Bull as the leader of Orthodoxy. This had just died down when Clarke's book appeared to revitalize what had seemed dead. It started at least three separate controversies. They were: the controversy in which Clarke

and his ideas were the targets of men's blows, that with which this thesis will concern itself; that in which certain Trinitarians argued among themselves; and that among the Dissenters leading to the Slaters' Hall controversy and also to Unitarianism later in the century.

This thesis will consist of four main parts. The first will briefly sketch in the necessary background; the second will concern itself with Clarke, the man and his thought--mainly his theological thought, his philosophy having been sufficiently dealt with elsewhere--; the third will concern itself with the book and the controversy as such; the last will indicate any conclusions we may have been able to reach.

Wherever it is possible, the material will be grouped. In other words, if several men have said the same thing, either one will be quoted, or the gist of what has been said by them will be given. This has been done, because, with the wealth of material found, quotations from each person writing on the subject would prove unwieldy and tiring to the reader. Much of the material on this subject has been found to be irrelevant, in that the writers spent so much time abusing each other that they came but slowly to the point of the argument. For this reason, the reader may be inclined to find this

resumé, if he wishes to call it that, rather shorter than he had expected. It is hoped that this will not prove displeasing, and that what material is gathered here will shed some light on a controversy and a man both long dead.

It is also to be hoped that, although no attempt is made to vindicate any of Clarke's heretical ideas, his thought may be scrutinized in such a way as to point out wherein he was an orthodox thinker, thus clearing his name, if possible, of part or all of the stain it has carried through these years.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the people who have given me stimulus and help. Above all, I wish to thank Miss Yvonne Wilson, M.A., without whose help in reading and rereading, there would be many more errors in the English of this thesis.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUNDS

SEVENTEENTH-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The seventeenth century was one in which there was more than the usual amount of change and growth in all fields. As Samuel Clarke (1675-1729) received the greatest part of his formal education during the latter part of this century, and made his contributions to the world of learning at the turn of the century, it is a foregone conclusion that his thought and work were influenced by this quickly changing century.

No detail is necessary, at this point, concerning the conflict between the Established Church and Non-conformity during this and the early eighteenth century, nor need we go into detail about the changes wrought by it on the line of royal succession. It is well known that the secular and the religious: the thought and its resultant actions: are always so dependent on one another as to be inseparable.

This whole period is summed up in the Cambridge Modern History.

"The history of thought and action -
always closely interwoven - in this age

"is inextricably intertwined. The framework of the national life appears to be entirely political, the civil revolution of 1688 has vanquished the religious revolution of 1642. Even the most abstract of thinkers and the most unworldly of clerics have a mundane and secular stamp upon them; even Butler is a courtier, even Leibniz is a wit. Religious, social, and literary influences show but as the tiny satellites of a political planet, to which they owe their warmth and their light. When, in 1727, Caroline, Princess of Wales, became the Queen of George II, all these political influences were intensified, for the Court became the chief centre not only of power, but of learning. She loved at all times to surround herself with learned men--profound theologians like Butler and Berkely, deep-read divines like Clarke and Potter, wide-minded philosophers like Leibniz, cultured Deists like Chesterfield. The Queen's interest in theology and the Establishment was keen; but it was primarily intellectual. She loved theological arguments rather than good works, and valued divines for depth of learning or subtlety of metaphysic rather than for fervour of piety. Deism--never popular with the masses or the country gentry--had an immense vogue at Court; and it implied a dogmatic system for the ignorant many."¹

During these two centuries, a great change occurred in the social structure of England. The growth of factories was causing an increase in the size of the cities, giving rise to a wealthy merchant class and also creating a very poor group of people who were compelled by

¹Ward, Prothero and Leathes, Cambridge Modern History, Vol. 6, p. 77.

their poverty to live in deplorable surroundings. This change in the social structure encouraged a more individualistic social life and pattern of thinking. Slowly a movement took root to fight for the rights and liberties of the people, a movement that could hardly have arisen in a society entirely dominated by the nobility. Communications were improving, and when this was combined with the growth of new ideas, the result was that these new ideas were rapidly spread abroad in an environment ready to receive them.

During the seventeenth century, there was a growth of a philosophic type of Christianity. This is accounted for by Basil Willey in a concise reference in his Seventeenth Century Background.

"Not only the main currents of intellectual development, but also the particular circumstances of political and ecclesiastical history in the seventeenth century, may be said to have given rise to this philosophic type of Christianity. The Reformation, which had originally involved the application of the spirit of enquiry to the system of mediaeval Christianity, had in fact ushered in a period not of 'enlightenment', but of embittered controversy. The Reformed Churches, appealing to Scripture against Rome, found themselves, in self-defence, compelled to define their positions in creeds and articles; and in the ensuing conflicts the original rationalising implications of the Reformation were lost sight of.

"Dogmatic protestantism, indeed, showed itself more hostile to 'rational' religion than the Church had been. ...By the middle of the seventeenth century the confessions had so multiplied that the force of the customary appeal to an external authority--whether of Pope, Council, or Scripture--was inevitably weakened, and religion, like philosophy, was constrained to look within for its certainties. The very same chaos which sent Hobbes flying for safety to his Leviathan, inspired those who cared for the theologico-metaphysical world-view to attempt the task of lifting religion right out of the sphere of controversy and placing it on a firm, because 'philosophical', foundation. The contests of Puritan and Prelatist wore down the prestige of the authoritarian beliefs, and opened the way for the explanatory spirit of the age to begin its attack on the traditional material."¹

During the seventeenth century, modern European thought took a renewed interest in searching for the true nature of things. The truth, as it is stated at any time, satisfies the demands of that particular time and place, and as knowledge progresses, it is possible that the old statement will no longer apply. When a new statement is formulated, it is not always necessary to proclaim that the old truth is invalid: the old may be validated by an addition of new facts. Thus it is not false to state that the summer is hotter than the winter

¹Page 120 f.

because God made it so, but with the advanced knowledge of the scientist, this has become a part-truth. The addition to this statement that makes it the truth for the modern mind is that the added warmth comes to a certain part of the earth when it comes closer to the sun than it has previously been.

When the people of the seventeenth century found the need for and the desire of a truth based on the search for the how and why of things rather than on authoritative statement, the scientific movement commenced. Man was no longer satisfied with answers arising from superstition. He wished to be free from fear; fear of the unknown; of vengeful Gods; of the power of the stars; of the devil: and to believe only in what he understood.

With the growing mass of scientific knowledge, there developed a conflict between science and religion. Thinking men now became aware of the necessity to reconcile two world views that seemed to be absolutely inconsistent. Up to the seventeenth century, the world's thought and actions had been dominated by the religious--the clergy and their views. During this century many thinkers began to feel that it was time for science to supplement religion. This change came about so rapidly that by the end of the century, religion was yielding to

science its place of preeminence as the main influence on both life and thought.

Before considering the ideas propounded by the more important thinkers of the age, it would be well to view in outline, the trend of the seventeenth century as a whole.

During this century, there was a gradual evaporation of belief in witchcraft, and with it came the waning of Satan's prestige as a personal deity, and the final triumph of the new philosophy. There was a sense of wanting to be freed from authority that could be felt in the search for the truth which resided in abstraction.

"Different kinds of truth were acknowledged,... for instance truths of faith and truths of reason; different orders of reality were recognised, and different kinds of explanation seen to be relevant in varying contexts. Nevertheless it may be said that if there was then any outstanding intellectual revolution in process of enactment, it was a general transference of interest from metaphysics to physics, from contemplation of Being to the observation of Becoming."¹

Scholasticism no longer satisfied the thinkers of the seventeenth century. All explanations of the scholastic type seemed to the new school to be trying to disguise statements of ignorance "in philosophic

¹Ibid, p. 6.

dress, equivalent, in fact, to asserting that things are such-and-such because they are."¹

With the passing of scholasticism and its a priori type of science, the cleavage between the realm of science and that of religion grew greater. There were now two truths to be sought after: the scientific and the religious. Bacon (1561-1626) believed that these two kinds of truth must be kept entirely separate. In a world dominated by religion, he was pleading for science; as he wanted to keep science pure of the pre-conceived ideas of religion.

Bacon maintained that Nature was divine, rather than Satanic as men and women of earlier days had considered it; and thus, being divine, it was something to be studied. He brought this argument to the fore in order to receive the sanction of the religious for his scientific pursuits.

The seventeenth century is notable not only for the growth of scientific interest, but also for outstanding thinkers in literary realms; for its "Authorized" version of the Bible published in 1611; for the Canons of 1604; and for the Anglican Prayer Book of 1662.

¹Ibid, p.8.

There was still a rigid allegiance of the Church to the King. Belief in a divine and indefeasible hereditary right was staunchly adhered to. On many occasions it was the King, rather than the Church, who took the initiative in religious issues. The present day political party tradition emerged in the seventeenth century, religious difference being the predominant catalyst in its formation.

So strong was the connection between Church and State, that acts precluding Roman Catholics and non-Anglican Protestants from office were allowed to stand on the Statute books, and were enforced. However, with the passing of the early Stuarts, the power of the Church became slightly less dominant. No longer did the Church have prerogative courts, nor could there be a revival of Laud's ecclesiastical control of the squire and the merchant. The importance of the Convocation was gravely diminished when Archbishop Sheldon surrendered the ancient privilege of this body to tax the clergy separately from the laity.

The Church was greatly weakened and disunited when the fear of Romanism made a vast number of its people desert James II and accept William III. This took place in spite of the principle of nonresistance

to the authority of a monarch believed to have divine hereditary right to rule, a belief so long impressed upon the Anglican mind. The division was intensified by the fact that the Bishops, appointed by the sovereigns, tended to become predominantly Whig. The clergy, being appointed by a diversity of patrons, were divided, but the majority were Tory. The third great factor in dividing the Church was that many clergy and laymen seemingly loyal to the new sovereigns, were only nominally so. Thus there was a deep-seated cleavage ruining the possibility of coherent action by the Church at a time most critical to its history. Thus too, it may be seen to what an extent politics dominated the Church of England.

"The Restoration period saw a growing enthusiasm for the methods and the discoveries of science: a "lay" and positive temper was at work, drawing men away from theological disputation or profoundly affecting their manner of approach to it. The currents of any decisive change in the outlook of an age are always likely to be inextricably interwoven, and it is impossible neatly to assess them, but we should no doubt reckon too among the signs of the times the writings and sermons of those Cambridge Platonists who, from within the Church, take us so refreshingly far from the more superficial aspects of ecclesiastical warfare. Their direct influence on affairs was small, but it was recognized that it made for "latitude", a word soon to be common currency in praise or blame for churchmen's

"tendencies, and that there was a new note in the summons to men 'to be throughout rational in what they do'."¹

For the Cambridge Platonists, the way to follow God was to follow reason. Reason was the ultimate source of authority in matters of faith, and as Reason is natural revelation, it follows that revelation is not confined to the pages of holy writ, nor to the age of the prophets and apostles. One may compare the 'inner light' of the Quakers; the 'reason' of the Platonists; the 'clear and distinct ideas' of Descartes; and the 'common notions' of Lord Herbert of Cherbury. These were all inward certainties by which those of the seventeenth century were testing the knowledge handed down to them from antiquity and by which they were declaring their spiritual independence.

As scientific experiment grew, many things formerly taken "on faith" were subjected to the application of scientific tests. However, there was a feeling that the Scriptures were a numinous book, and as such they should not be subjected to this kind of testing. They were to remain in the region of Faith.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the

¹Williams, A. T. P., The Anglican Tradition in the Life of England, p. 45.

Scriptures no longer held their former position. Now natural religion began to seem all-sufficient, God was discovered in His creations, and the revelation of the Scriptures became to many of that day, as it is to many of our day, slightly inconvenient.

The two main kinds of certainty discovered during this century--objective or external, and subjective or internal--correspond to the division of reality into Extension (matter) and Thought (mind, soul) made by Descartes (1596-1650). Descartes is especially interesting to those concerned with Samuel Clarke, not only because he has been called 'the Father of modern philosophy', but also because Clarke found the Cartesian philosophy in predominance when he went to Cambridge. He felt that the Newtonian philosophy surpassed, and therefore should replace the Cartesian. To expedite the change, Clarke translated the Traité de Physique of the Cartesian, Rohault, into good Latin, and annotated it liberally with Newtonian philosophy.¹

Descartes exerted a major influence on the intellectual history of this period. He believed, along with other seventeenth century thinkers, that the

¹See below, page 32.

'truth' could be found not through the senses, but through intellectual perception. The only true knowledge was that to which the mind contributed nothing, but which it fully understood. "Yet, influential as the Cartesian philosophy was, it was not its details which profoundly affected popular thought, but its assertion that all conceptions must be doubted till proved, and that any adequate proof must have the certainty of mathematical demonstration."¹

The starting point of Descartes' thinking was scepticism. He discovered very early in his pursuit of the truth that there was one thing that he could not doubt. This was the fact that he existed. Unless he existed, how could he doubt? Thus the first truth for Descartes became his existence: the second, that the "I" was a thinking being. It thus came to pass that Descartes adopted as his primary dictum cogito, ergo sum. Having established this as the first certainty, he felt compelled to establish more. He decided that whatever is clearly and distinctly apprehended must be true. The only idea Descartes could conceive that might not come from his awareness of his own being, and from within his own mind,

¹Walker, W., A History of the Christian Church, p.484.

was the idea of God. He felt that the attributes and qualities making up the idea of God could not be derived from his awareness of himself, and that therefore it was necessary to conclude that God exists, and Himself made known His attributes and qualities to man's mind.

Locke (1632-1704), on the other hand, denied the existence of innate ideas. He believed that the mind was a white paper upon which sensation wrote impressions, and by reflection, the mind turned impressions into ideas. By combining simple ideas, one arrived at complex ones. The existence of God was proved by argument from cause to effect.

Next, Descartes turned his scrutiny to the field of certainty which was called mathematics. Mathematical properties are clear and distinct, therefore they guarantee objective reality.

There was in Descartes' system a problem of dualism which was difficult to solve. This was that the soul and body, although coming together in man, were two entirely separate things. It was not until God was brought in as arbitrator that a solution was to be found. For example, when a man saw a tree, it was God who caused the sense impression of "tree" to be transferred to his soul. When a man desired to make a movement with

part of his body, God caused the movement, willed by the mind, to be carried out by the body. Thus God was found to be necessary in philosophy.

Another thinker whose views substantially influenced the thought of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was Hobbes (1588-1679). He believed that only material things were real, and adopted wholeheartedly the new philosophy, becoming completely satisfied with naturalistic types of explanation. His knowledge of the meaning of matter or body, he left unquestioned, as Descartes left unquestioned the existence of matter and soul. Soul, for Hobbes, meant simply 'life': he did not believe in the existence of a separate and immaterial soul.

Although he held to a non-Christian, non-religious philosophy, Hobbes kept up an appearance of Orthodoxy in Leviathan, because it would have taken a less timorous soul than his to affront the Religious in the seventeenth century.¹

It was with a sense of opposition to Hobbes' conviction that the Truth must be sought in a mechanical world-view that a group now called 'rational

¹Willey, Op. Cit., p. 112.

theologians' began to voice their own views. This group was convinced that it was through the religious world-view, and not the material one, that this Truth might be learned by man.

The problem that this group faced was: How can religion and philosophy be combined? How can Christianity be explained? How can it be stated in such a way that it will be reasonable? Answers to these questions began to be formulated during the last part of the seventeenth century, but they may be considered questions of the turn of the century, as rational theology and natural theology went hand in hand through the door leading out of the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century.

One of the earliest writers of this group, antedating the majority of the group, was Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648), who, as the 'father of deism', enumerated as early as 1624, articles of belief alleged to constitute natural religion. As deism had Samuel Clarke as one of its eighteenth century opponents, space will herein be devoted to a short review of its tenets.

The articles of belief set forth by Lord Herbert were: (1) There is a Supreme Being. (2) This Supreme Being, or Sovereign Power, must be worshipped. (3) The

practice of virtue is the true mode of doing Him honour.

(4) Man is under obligation to repent of his sins and do penance for them. (5) There are rewards and punishments after death.

These five articles, Herbert believed, were the fundamental religious notions common to all mankind: they are the quintessence of all religious belief. It has been said that this quintet is not common ground for all peoples, but is on the whole a developed theory. None-the-less, Herbert's immediate followers accepted this as a statement of natural, universal, reasonable religion.¹

All that is acknowledged as existing beyond the limits of reason, they asserted, is held without proof, and is therefore only superstition. Revelation and miracles are included in this category. The only way to be free is to be rid of superstition, hence the freethinker is the only rational thinker.² Revelation, to be true, must come to the individual, who, at the same time feels a particular motion of God towards himself.³

¹Walker, Op. Cit., p. 487.

²Ibid.

³Willey, Op. Cit., p.132.

Deism championed freedom of inquiry, and the search for certainty. It insisted on reason as the sole instrument for acquiring and judging truth, and the use of method rather than doubt. In this it may be said to offer a parallel to the Cartesian renaissance in philosophy, and to represent the beginning of modern English theology. Herein lies its importance in the history of theological thought.¹

It was this type of deism which Clarke attacked in several of his writings, but there was another type of deism which has been given the prefix negative.

Charles Blount (1654-1693) was the propounder of negative deism. His doctrine consisted of criticism of the Scripture, of received views as to the authorship of various books of the Bible, of miracles, of Christian doctrine and ecclesiastical history. The keynote may be termed 'suggested doubtfulness of data, evidences and arguments upon which revealed religion had been based'. This would be an indication that Clarke was not the only person of his time who doubted existing data or examined the Scriptures.

It was from this latter type of deism that there

¹Tennant, "Deism", Encyclopedia Britanica.

evolved the critical sciences of the next century which effected a revolution in Christian Apologetics.

Except for negative deism, the seventeenth century religious rationalizing was conservative in nature. The assumption was not that religious truths were unsound, but that if they were once set free from all of the extraneous traditional matter, the core of these truths would be found to be most sound.

The Cambridge Platonists,¹ a predominantly Puritan group, desired more than anything else to conserve and reinforce from within the religious truths of which they were convinced. To them Hobbes' "caricature of human life and character" was scandalous and one sided. They "sought to show that moral laws are eternal and immutable, grounded in the very essence of human nature."²

They stressed that each person could, by his own efforts, come constantly closer to perfection through allowing the Holy Spirit to guide him. The modern, liberal, conception that Heaven, Hell and Judgment are here and now was voiced by this group of theologians. They too called Heaven, Happiness, and described

¹See above, p. 9f.

²Tsanoff, The Moral Ideals of Our Civilization, p. 161.

it as proximity to God, and Hell, Misery, or estrangement from Him.

Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688), who seems to have influenced Clarke¹, and Henry More were the main exponents of metaphysical teaching to be found in the Platonist school. Both men shared the rationalist viewpoint: both were friends: both were Platonists, and with such similar views, they almost came to blows over the publication of More's Enchiridion Ethicum, which Cudworth felt might anticipate the publication of his own Intellectual System.

As vehemently as Hobbes had affirmed the reality of body, Cudworth and More affirmed the reality of the spirit. More was the greater mystic of the two, and believed that not only does man have an intellectual conviction of the existence of his spirit; he experiences it too.

Both of these men believed that moral principles have an eternal rational validity. This had to be defended against atheists, and also against those who would establish morality solely on God's commands. Cudworth went to great lengths to exalt the immutable

¹See below, p. 52.

and external character of moral principles, but he failed to give his ethics content.¹ More, on the other hand, used these rational principles of morality as foundations for his ethical structure. More believed that blessedness and virtue were to be obtained by striving. Man has free will. He also has the ability to make the moral effort to obtain perfection.

Reality, for Cudworth, was that which is self-existent and not dependent for its authenticity on anything else. Just as Descartes was convinced of the existence of God by the impossibility of forming such an idea in his own awareness, so Cudworth found proof of His existence when he was convinced that only thus could there be self-existence.

The eighteenth century was ushered in by philosophers having some degree of religious conviction: God could not be entirely separated from His world in spite of the new science.

The turn of the century has been summarized by Basil Willey in his The Eighteenth Century Background.

"As the seventeenth century wore to its close, Nature and Reason began on the whole to gain upon Aristotle and the Rules. The great influence of

¹Tsanoff, Op. Cit., p. 166.

"Descartes, who had taught men to look within for their first certainties, and had spread abroad the clear light of geometric reasoning, told strongly on behalf of 'Moderns' versus 'Ancients'. It was not that one adopted any new standards: supporters of both parties in that controversy seem to have shared the same general scale of values. It was a sense that the world's great age was beginning anew, and that pupilage to antiquity was now unnecessary. Now that right Reason had down returned to men, we could address ourselves to her, and neglect the mediation of Aristotle and Horace, her interpreters."¹

To Aristotle and Horace may be added the early Church Fathers, as much of the theological polemic of the early eighteenth century concerned the validity of their opinions. Many were convinced that because the Fathers had propounded certain ideas, these must be true, but there were just as many, perhaps even more, who believed that by turning to the Scriptures, using Reason and other external helps as guides, one might find Truth without depending upon the Fathers. Indeed, the Fathers might even be proved incorrect!

The eighteenth century has "been well described as 'an age destitute of depth or earnestness, an age whose poetry was without romance, whose philosophy was

¹Pp. 22f. NOTE: In the last sentence, "down" is the correct transcription.

without insight, and whose public men were without character, an age of light without love, whose very merits were of the earth, earthy.'"¹

What of the Church? How had the coming of a new century affected her?

During the latter part of the seventeenth century there had been an increasing exodus of many convinced Puritans from the Established Church into Non-conformity, and a generation later, the Non-Jurors followed. These men had been devout, no doubt, and their loss helped to weaken the spiritual fervour of the Church.

"The Church Whigs had therefore become the key to the situation, but it will not be forgotten that Tories, and many Tory Jacobites, were to be found in scores and hundreds of parishes through the length and breadth of England. In the political position alone, then, there is to be found much reason for the Church's inability to act as a whole in matters spiritual."²

If the Church had been able to act as a unit, and if it had been determined to do so, the position

¹Patterson, A History of the Church of England, p. 380. Although this may be true, with Bach, Handel, Mozart, and others of the great composers, the eighteenth century was far from barren. Bach alone would point the finger of falsehood at "an age of light without love, whose very merits were of the earth, earthy." Their works were not confined to the Continent.

²Williams, Op. Cit., p.55.

of Samuel Clarke and others might have been quite different. A goodly proportion of the beneficed clergy were poorly paid. For this reason the fullest advantage was taken of the many legal exceptions allowed to the rules against holding a plurality of benefices. Clarke held benefices when he was royal chaplain to Queen Anne. He also took on the direction of a hospital when he was rector of St. James'.¹ According to all reports, Clarke's work in all of his posts was acceptably performed, but that was not true of all pluralists. Their efficiency was reduced; place hunting was encouraged; and these conditions were used by both members of society and politicians in a disastrous fashion.²

Church authority was in the hands of the individual bishops, who were members of the House of Lords and socially persons of great dignity and consideration. Many of them held great estates. Thus social and political considerations often eclipsed their spiritual activities, adding to the chaotic conditions of the Church of the day.

Too often the sermons of the eighteenth century

¹See below, pp. 37 and 42.

²Williams, Op. Cit., p.55.

became mere moral discourses. "The study of nature, and of that 'natural philosophy' open to all, would lead up to God and to the acceptance of a few great moral principles, and it would be fortified by the main outlines of the Christian revelation, but the complications of the creeds and of the doctrines about the Trinity of the Divine Being were superfluous."¹ Yet how much paper and ink were used in the Trinitarian controversies of that century !

Just after the first half of the eighteenth century had spent its strength with little spiritual growth, there began a great awakening which was to have far reaching effects on the lives of numberless people, and on the Church itself. This was the Wesleyan movement. Is it possible that Clarke and the others who wrote so prolifically and earnestly in the controversies of their day felt the need for this spiritual revival and misinterpreted the need as merely an intellectual one?

This, then, was the age of the great satirists: literature, music, art and architecture were all finding new expression. In spite of this, what little

¹Ibid, p. 59.

was done in the name of religion at the turn of the century was done by such mediocre men that most of them have been lost with their works, on dusty shelves.

Deism, having its beginning in the seventeenth century, was the centre of much debate in the eighteenth. Although it failed to affect the deeper currents of religious thought because of its distance from everyday life and because of its frigidity of thought, English religion would not have reached its present condition without having passed through the fire of Deistic debate¹ even though the debate was more philosophical than theological in nature.

Even more important to the subject of this thesis was the eighteenth century revival of the fourth century controversy known today as the "Arian Controversy". Samuel Clarke stands accused of reviving this argument: indeed he and his friend William Whiston are said to have been the two English divines most deserving of the name "Arian".² Some of the men entering into the field of polemic with Clarke called him Socinian, but the name Arian seems to have become his permanent label.

¹Hastings, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, "Deism".

²Foakes-Jackson, "Arianism", Hastings, ERE, Vol.1.

There were various controversies in the early Church concerning the Persons of the Holy Trinity. Two fixed axioms were maintained by all of the early Christians; the Unity of God, and the Divinity of His Son. Jesus, identified with the *λόγος*, or Word, was considered to have been preexistent with God since before creation; a performer of miracles; he had been resurrected; ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father. Controversies arose over the reconciliation of these two tenets. In attempting to maintain the unity, one endangered either the Divinity of Christ or His Personality,¹ or else one had to say with the Sabellians that Jesus Christ is hardly more than a temporary means used by God to manifest Himself to man. Western theologians tended to emphasize the eternal unity in the Trinity to such a degree that they obscured the distinction of the Persons therein: Eastern theologians insisted that through subordination of one Person to another, one could explain the existence of a threefold Personality.² Here the seeds of Arianism may be found.

In 318 and 319 A. D., Bishop Alexander and

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

presbyter Arius became involved in controversy. Alexander had tried to impress upon the minds of his clergy the fact of the Unity of the Godhead in such a way that Arius found cause to accuse him of Sabellianism. He then proceeded to formulate a doctrine of his own, maintaining the complete distinction between Father and Son, with the subordination of the latter.

"Harnack (Hist. of Dogma, vol. iv, p. 15, Eng. Tr.) enumerates eight points of the view (of) Arius-

(1) The characteristic of the One and Only God is solitude and eternity. He can put nothing forth from His own essence. He was not always Father, but only after He begat (i.e. created) the Son.

(2) Wisdom and the Word (λόγος) dwell within this God, but they are powers, not Persons.

(3) To create the universe, God brought into being an independent substance (ὄντῃα OR ὑποστάσεις) as the instrument by which all things were created. This Being is termed, in Scripture, Wisdom, Son, Image, Word, etc.

(4) As regards His substance, the Son is a separate being from the Father, different from Him in substance and nature. Like all rational creatures, the Son is endowed with free will, and consequently capable of change.

(5) The Son is not truly God, but is only the so-called Word and Wisdom. He has no absolute, but only a relative, knowledge of the Father.

(6) The Son is not, however, a creature like other creatures. He is the perfect creature (κτίσμα τέλειον), and has become God, so that we may term Him 'the only begotten God', etc.

(7) Christ took a real body, but it was a σῶμα ἄψυχον, the Logos taking

"the place of the soul. From the Gospel record we see that this Logos is not an absolutely perfect being, but is capable of suffering.

(8) Amongst other created beings the Holy Ghost is to be placed beside the Son as a second, independent substance. According to Arius, apparently, the Spirit is the creation of the Son.

Such, then, was Arianism--a theory of the mutual relations of the Persons in the Trinity based nominally on the words of Scripture, but arrived at really by the methods of the heathen philosophers. It led either to polytheism by allowing the existence of the Logos as a secondary God, or to Judaic Unitarianism by denying His proper Divinity."¹

The Arian conception of the Father is that He is unknown and unknowable, and as such is outside of and separate from His creation: He is a transcendent God rather than an immanent Father.

Although the Arian Controversy officially ended in 381 with the council of Constantinople, there have been many revivals of it since that time. Some writers have suggested that its reappearance in the eighteenth century may have been caused by Puritanism and the cold rational philosophy of Locke and his followers. Reason and faith were played against one another as antagonists, and those who still remained true to

¹Ibid.

faith either rejected Christ's divinity or turned to the Arian view of a quasi-divinity.

In spite of the fact that The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity includes only one proposition in fifty-five which could not be subscribed to by one of Arius' immediate followers, and that Clarke's opponents called him an Arian, nevertheless he himself was outspoken against Arians.¹ However, since he concluded, after the examination of over twelve-hundred Scripture texts, that the Father is Supreme: the Son divine through communication from the Supreme Being, and the Holy Spirit inferior to both in order, dominion and authority, there is some basis for the judgement made upon him. More will be said on this subject in subsequent pages.

This then is the heritage of thought and the general condition of the times into which Clarke was born, and in which he did his work: preaching, studying and writing, and carrying out the function of a pastor.

¹Clarke, e.g.: Scripture-Doctrine..., props. 16, 23.

CHAPTER II

SAMUEL CLARKE

THE MAN AND HIS THOUGHT

Samuel Clarke (1675-1729) was a man of two centuries. On October 11, 1675 he was born into the home of an Alderman and representative in Parliament for Norwich, England, and was brought up in typical middle class surroundings. At the proper age, he was sent to the Grammar School of Norwich, where he became proficient in the "learned languages".

After the completion of his schooling, in 1691--and there is no further record of these years extant--he went to Caius College, Cambridge, where he was able to use his knowledge of Greek, Latin and Hebrew to good purpose. Clarke applied himself well to his studies, and excelled in natural philosophy, mathematics, divinity and critique.

It was usual for all students to learn the Cartesian philosophy, so Clarke's tutor, Mr. Ellis, duly exposed his pupil to Cartesian works. Clarke was

an individualist: a true child of his day. He read some of Newton's works, was favourably impressed by them, and decided to become Newton's theological lieutenant. Few students of his day had been able to master Newton's Principia, which considered the motion of particles or bodies in free space and in known orbits, under action of known forces or under mutual attraction; and also dynamics and geometrical investigations of various properties of conic sections; but Clarke mastered this work as well as that subsequent to it. He dreamed of replacing the Cartesian philosophy with Newtonian philosophy in the Universities of his day.

For his first degree, Clarke argued one of the questions from Newtonian philosophy, and did so with a clearness of expression and an accuracy of knowledge that surprised all his hearers.¹ After this indication of his knowledge of Newtonian philosophy, he must have been gratified by the recognition accorded to him as Newton's theological champion.

As soon as he had obtained the first degree,²

¹Hoadly, B., Preface to Clarke's Sermons, p.iiiif.

²Ibid, p.iv. Whiston says (Historical Memoirs, p. 2-3) that he did this translation during the time that he was a pupil of Mr. Ellis.

Clarke took the works of the Cartesian, Rohault, which were then in use as textbooks, in poor Latin, translated them into good Latin, and annotated them with ideas formulated from his study of Newton. This translation of Traité de Physique, appearing in 1697, prepared the way for the reception of Newton's works as text-books at Cambridge, as Clarke had hoped it would.

After this, he turned his full attention to Divinity, which he proposed to make his life work and study. Shortly after making this decision, he met Bishop John Moore, then Bishop of Norwich. This meeting opened new vistas for the young Clarke, as it was through the Bishop that he was able to obtain those posts which he held, and through him too, that he entered the court of Queen Anne.

The meeting had been brought about by William Whiston who was then Moore's chaplain. He had met Clarke by chance, and had been so impressed by the young man's knowledge of philosophy, that he made a point of introducing Clarke to his patron. The latter too was impressed by the young man, and thus, when Whiston's departure left a vacancy, Clarke, just becoming old enough to receive orders, succeeded him as Chaplain to Bishop Moore. Whiston became a close friend

of his successor's, and when writing of him, he says that Clarke was well beloved and esteemed by those who knew him. This seems to have been the general opinion of all of Clarke's friends. Even those who disagreed with him, and entered into bitter controversy with him, to the point of abuse, had to admit that Clarke was a learned man with whom it was worth arguing.

During the several years that Clarke continued in his post as Chaplain, he studied both Old and New Testaments in their original tongues, as well as the works of the earliest writers of the Christian Church. In this way he increased his formal knowledge to such a degree as to be ready to publish original works, and to enter upon any controversies which proved to be of interest to him.

In 1699 he published his first theological works: Three Practical Essays upon Baptism, Confirmation and Repentance. In this year too, he began his controversies with the Deists, based upon Toland's Some Reflections on Amyntor: a book relating to the early Fathers and the Canon of the New Testament. These first attempts of his could not compare with his later works, but as first attempts, they were quite impressive.

One of Clarke's hopes for his life work was

that he might understand, and help others to understand also, the phraseology and meaning of the Holy Scripture. His first essay to this end was A Paraphrase on St. Matthew's Gospel, published in 1701. This was soon followed by paraphrases on the other Gospels. These paraphrases were accompanied by a few short notes where Clarke felt commentary to be necessary. They were well done on the whole, but occasionally there were departures from strict paraphrase. One example of this is found in his sections dealing with the birth of Jesus. The wording, as found in the New Testament is "and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son:"¹ "and she brought forth her firstborn son"², and in each case, Clarke has replaced the word firstborn with the word onlyborn.³

Benjamin Hoadly praises all of these essays very highly and laments the fact that essays according similar treatment to the remaining portions of the New Testament did not follow the paraphrases on the Gospels. Clarke had commenced work on the book of Acts, and was contemplating working on the remaining books, but unfor-

¹Matt. 1:25 ²Luke 2:2 (Italics mine)

³Clarke, Works, Vol. 3, pgs. 3 and 235.

tunately the task remained incomplete to the time of his death.¹

After Clarke had held this post as Chaplain for some time, Bishop Moore gave him the rectory of Drayton, near Norwich, and also procured for him a parish there. The Bishop considered this as a stepping stone to a parish in London, where he felt a man of Clarke's abilities should be.

It has been noted that Clarke was a scholar. He was a preacher too. His preaching had a certain strength and fluency, and, until he went to St. James' Westminster in 1709 and decided to publish his sermons, he preached without notes. Even in this day, the recorded sermons are on the whole quite readable, although some of them fall into the category called now "string of pearl sermons". In place of this type of modern sermon consisting mainly of illustrations strung together, Clarke took passages of Scripture and joined them by a sentence or two. Clarke's sermons must have been short for his day, as they were mainly twenty minutes to half an hour in length.

¹Hoadly, Op. Cit., p. ix f. A. A. Sykes, in his "Elogium..." lauds these works highly, and remarks that Clarke died before he was able to paraphrase the Epistles: a piece of work he intended, till the last, to do.

In 1704 Clarke preached the Boyle Lectures on The Being and Attributes of God, and although a great deal of controversy was aroused by them, he had preached in such a way that he was asked to give the lectures again in 1705. This time he used as his subject Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion. Both of these series were published as corrected by Clarke, and with some of his own additions. Sorley maintains that these lectures may be considered Clarke's best pieces of work, containing nothing new, but being masterfully arranged material.¹

Whiston informs his readers that it was just about this time that Clarke began to have suspicions about the validity of the Athanasian Doctrine of the Trinity as truly the doctrine of the Primitive Fathers.² These suspicions were, in part, the cause of his work on the subject of the Trinity.

Shortly after the Boyle Lectures, Dr. Moore gave Clarke the rectory of St. Bennet's Wharf, and it was about this same time that Clarke and Dodwell entered into a controversy. The latter wrote on the powers and dignity of the priesthood, which Clarke answered

¹Sorley, A History of English Philosophy, p.156.

²Whiston, Historical Memoirs of the Life of Clarke, p. 7f.

with regard to the philosophical sections and those sections dealing with the opinions of the early Church Fathers.

In 1705 Clarke translated Newton's Opticks, and Whiston says that Sir Isaac was so pleased with the elegant Latin of the translation that he gave Clarke £500, one hundred for each of his five children.¹

Moore soon procured for Clarke the post of Chaplain in Ordinary to Queen Anne, and she came to have such regard for him that she consented to the Bishop's request that he be sent to St. James' Westminster. Thus it was that he became rector there in the heart of the rapidly growing metropolis of London in 1709. He remained in this post for the last twenty years of his life. In speaking of Clarke's incumbency, Sykes remarks that his congregation held him in such high esteem that anything he suggested to the Vestry was instantly approved.

In addition to making the decision that it was time to publish his sermons, Clarke now decided that he had advanced sufficiently at the University to work for the Doctor of Divinity Degree. The questions which he

¹Ibid, p. 9.

worked upon at Cambridge toward this end were (1) No article of the Christian faith, delivered in the Holy Scriptures, is disagreeable to right reason. (2) Without the liberty of human actions there can be no religion. These Hoadly styles "Two Questions, worthy of such a Divine and such a Philosopher, to propose for Publick Debate !"¹

Clarke's thesis was on the first of these two questions. The remainder of the examination for the degree was a public debate carried on in Latin with the professor of Divinity, Dr. James, who was a very ready and acute person in debate. Hoadly goes on to say that this debate was wonderful to all who heard it, with Clarke giving Dr. James good mental exercise. After the debate was over, including an accidental, and incidental one over the meaning of the word EXACUO, the professor said to Clarke: "Profecto, Me probé exacuisti" ("in truth, you have thoroughly rubbed me up,") or, "Finem jam faciam; Nam ME probé Exercuisti" ("I will now make an end; for you have worked me thoroughly.") Hoadly was not at all certain which one of these was the true rendering of what had taken place, but he felt

¹Hoadly, Op. Cit., p. xx.

that the latter wording was the more probable, as Dr. James usually dismissed his student-opponents with "Finem jam faciam; Nam TE probé exercui" ("...; I have sufficiently worked You",) and as the doctor had a sense of humour, this would probably be a play with words that he would enjoy.¹ However, which ever way the dismissal was worded, it was looked upon as a high compliment to Clarke, tending to prove that he had been alert enough mentally to make the professor remain en garde throughout the whole exercise.²

In 1712 Clarke published an edition of Caesar's Commentary in folio, with notes. It was during this same year that he published the first edition of the book that was to be the centre of controversy for many years to come, both within the Church of England and in Non-conformist groups. The name of this book, which was the fruit of many years of thought and study upon the subject of the Trinity, was The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity. In it he noted all of the texts in the

¹Ibid, p.xxii f. A better translation for "exacuisti" might be "sharpened": for "exercuisti"-- "exercised".

²In Gentleman's Magazine for March, 1783, there is a report of an old man who, having heard this exercise when he was younger, said that he would still travel many miles to hear another like it.

New Testament that mention the Trinity or any of the Persons included in it, studying the words for shades of meaning and deciding what he thought to be the truth contained in some of the more veiled phrases. The influence of his works spread to Germany as well as throughout England, and J. H. Escher translated the Scripture-Doctrine... into his native (German) tongue.¹

As Clarke was a firm believer in the individual interpretation of the Scriptures, one of the main characteristics of Protestantism, he found himself at variance with the accepted views of the Church from time to time. This was true of his book on the Trinity. Within the covers of this book was what he believed to be the truth, but the Convocation of 1714 did not agree with him, and tried to make him recant. He would not: indeed, he remained adamant until his death.² Whether

¹Zimmermann, Samuel Clarke's Leben und Lehre, says that even before Clarke's death, both Germany and England had had the benefit of his works. There are French translations in existence too.

²Burgess, Christian Theocracy, p.77: Burgess here quotes from Chevalier Ramsey that "Dr. Clarke owned to me some time before his death, after several conferences that I had with him, how much he repented that he had ever published his work, the Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity". This remark is unsubstantiated, and indeed it is denied on page viii of Clarke's Works, Vol. I. His son denied another similar statement.

or not Clarke was the heretic he was said to be by those who disagreed with him remains to be seen, and in a later chapter the facts will be presented upon which the reader may base his own opinion of the matter.

The next controversy in which Clarke found himself was one which was instigated by Queen Caroline.¹ She enjoyed having the learned men of her day hold debates in her presence, and as she was well versed in theology and philosophy herself, she was able to understand what was being said. In this spirit, she asked Clarke and Leibniz to have a debate. As the controversy between these two men is a well known one, the core of the matter given below will suffice.

Leibniz asserted that time and space are existent only in imagination. Clarke maintained that both truly exist: that they are realities. He felt that the annihilation of time and space are beyond the power of omnipotence. In addition, Clarke held that Leibniz's answer to the question of free will was an evasion and really amounted to admitting necessity, which was his

¹Sorley, Op. Cit., p. 156, maintains that this arose through a comment made by Leibniz on a remark of Newton's in which space was spoken of as the sensorium of God.

position.¹

The papers which passed between the two men were published in 1717 with a French and English version side by side.

In 1718 Clarke made an attempt to change the Doxology when he used it in his Church to what Whiston called the "primitive form".² He wanted to change it to "To God, through Christ, his Son, our Lord, All Glory be." The Bishop refused to allow such a change.

Clarke had reached a point in his thinking by this time which would not allow him to accept any preferment requiring subscription to the Athanasian Creed or form of worship, as he was convinced of its fallacy. Therefore, when he was offered the mastership of Wigstan's Hospital in Leicester, where no subscription was asked, he accepted. He felt that it was wrong to ask subscription to anything which was suspected by many and judged unlawful by some. His belief now was that if these suspected things were taken out of the terms of Communion, and Christianity were reduced to New Testament terms only, the minds of sincere Christians would be

¹See below, p. 54.

²Whiston, Op. Cit., p. 76.

much easier.

In 1719 the second edition of The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity appeared. Incorporated in this edition was a number of corrections or additions in the form of quotations from material appearing between 1712 and 1719. The third section, dealing with the Liturgy, was treated most harshly, being worded so differently as to seem almost new. The underlying tone did not change, however. There were fewer changes made in the third edition which was published in 1732, three years after Clarke's death.

A Discourse against Mr. Collins, on the Prophecies of the Old Testament, showing the strong influence of Sir Isaac Newton's Hypothesis of Daniel's LXX Weeks was published by Clarke in 1725.

When Sir Isaac died in 1727, Clarke was offered the post of Master of the Mint, left vacant by Newton's demise. It was worth between £1200 and £1500 per year, but after consulting with his friends, Clarke refused, as the post was entirely remote from his profession and might be detrimental to his ministry.

The last work to be published in Clarke's lifetime was an almost new translation of the first twelve books of Homer's Iliad, with notes, appearing in 1729.

Whiston was quite aggrieved to think of the time spent by Clarke on studying a "profane author" when he should have spent the time studying in his own field, but when he learned that most of the work had been done in earlier years, he was more reconciled to it.¹

A posthumous edition of the Exposition of the Church Catechism, &c. was published in 1729, and a second edition of his collected Sermons in 1730, with a preface by Hoadly, entitled Account of the Life and Writings of Sam'l Clarke. This preface also appeared with The Works of Samuel Clarke published in 1738.

Neither Hoadly nor Whiston gives much detail about the private life of Clarke. An article in the Gentleman's Magazine for March, 1783² is perhaps the most detailed of the extant material on his life. This article is a symposium collected by someone who was greatly interested in Samuel Clarke and in the work he did.

The author says that he wrote to Clarke's son, Samuel, to ask that all the relevant matter, works and anecdotes concerning his father be preserved, as he

¹Ibid, p. 112.

²Urban, (ed.) Gentleman's Magazine, March, 1783, p. 228f.

held Clarke in such high esteem that he felt it would be wrong to discard anything at all relevant to the life and work of so great a man.

The article itself is a collection of items sent in to the author by various people who knew Clarke intimately. Like a string of beads connected by a single thread, the items have an underlying unity in that they all deal with the character of Clarke. As it may interest the reader to see who made the statements, these reports will now be dealt with in the same manner.

The report made by Mrs. A. A. Sykes said that Clarke was of a humane and tender disposition. It pained him so much to see anything hurt that he told his children never to kill a fly or any other of God's creatures unless to save themselves from harm after all other methods of protection had failed. Another account from Mrs. Sykes informs the reader that when Clarke came to see her husband, they would sit on the couch, Clarke with his head on Sykes' "bosom" and talk in a most intimate way, freely and easily, on a variety of subjects interesting to both men.

"T. Sh. Esquire" reports that the Doctor was very clear in his ideas and ready in his answers, even on disputable points of theology. He was excellent in

expressing himself.

Reports from his student days giving Clarke the name of an outstanding student, and the account concerning the examination exercise with Dr. James¹ are repeated in this article.

Clarke's son tells of his father's aversion to wasting time. He was never idle, always carrying a book with him to read as he rode in the carriage, walked in the fields, or even when he was in company, if he felt that he could do so in the particular group.

An intimate friend, Rev. Mr. Pyle of Lynn, tells of Clarke's excellent memory. He gives a first hand report of having heard Clarke declare that he never forgot anything he had once thoroughly apprehended and understood. Clarke knew Scripture well, and could immediately cite the particular place in the Old or New Testament in which a certain text might be found.²

An instance of Clarke's ability to discern when to be formal and when not to be, what to say, and the correct time to say it, is reported in this article too. According to the report, Mr. Say

¹See above, p. 38f.

²See too Waterland, Works, Vol. X, p. 200, on this point.

"had once a friend, who calling to see him, expressed a great desire to see and converse with Dr. Clarke, with whom Mr. Say was well acquainted. Presently after, Dr. Clarke came into the room unexpectedly, and seeing Mr. Say (but not seeing the visitor) at the farther end of it, ran alertly to him, and embraced him, being so intimate and dear a friend. Discerning the stranger that moment, he sat down, and though, in all probability, he had many things, as usual, to say to his friend, he forbore, and said nothing; only entered, but spoke cautiously, upon ordinary topics. We may judge from hence of his great freedom naturally, where he well knew he could be free; and of his just circumspection, where he could not be sure that he might with prudence be so."¹

Rev. Dr. Young said that Clarke was of a free and open disposition in discourse, "That no man was more so. He was," he said, "civil, obliging, and modest, and far from reservedness, when there was a proper occasion for freedom in conversation."² Thus he reinforced the report Mr. Say had made.

The story of the deathbed scene with Sir John Germaine emphasises Clarke's intellectual honesty. Germaine wanted to know whether the Sacrament would help him at this juncture, after the life he had led.

¹Urban, (ed.) Op. Cit.

²Ibid.

Clarke frankly replied that he thought not and withheld the Sacrament, but commended Sir John's soul to the mercy of God.

This integrity is further emphasised by the story of Pope's annoyance when Clarke refused a request from the poet to use his influence with the Queen to have Lord Bolingbroke recalled from France with a general pardon.

Many of his friends bemoaned the fact that Clarke did not instigate a reformation in the Church in the direction of Primitive Christianity,¹ but that was not Clarke's intention.

Whiston quotes Hare² who gives an excellent summary of the facts thus gleaned.

"Dr. Clarke is a Man who has all the good Qualities that can meet together, to recommend him. He is possessed of all Parts of Learning that are valuable in a Clergyman, in a Degree that few possess any single one. He has joined to a good Skill in the three learned languages, a great Compass of the best Philosophy and Mathematicks, as appears by his Latin Works: And his English ones are such a Proof of his own Piety, and of his Knowledge

¹Whiston, Op. Cit., p. 134.

²Ibid, p. 135f. See p.70f, Observations on Whiston's Historical Memoirs... for more praise of Clarke.

"in Divinity, and have done so much Service to Religion, as would make any other Man, that was not under the Suspicion of Heresy, secure of the Friendship and Esteem of all good Churchmen, especially of the Clergy. And to all this Piety and Learning, and the good Use that has been made of it, is added a Temper happy beyond Expression: A sweet, easy, modest, inoffensive, obliging Behaviour adorns all his Actions; and no Passion, Vanity, Insolence, or Ostentation, appear either in what he writes or says: And yet these Faults are often incident to the best Men, in the Freedom of Conversation, and in writing against impertinent and unreasonable Adversaries, especially such as strike at the Foundations of Virtue and Religion. This is the Learning, this the Temper, of the Man, whose Study of the Scriptures has betrayed him into a Suspicion of some Heretical Opinions."

On Sunday, May 11, 1729, when he went out to preach for the Judges at Sergeant's Inn, Clarke was stricken with a pain in his side which Sykes says was pleurisy¹, and which made it impossible for him to continue. After he had been carried home, he was subjected to the usual blood-letting procedure, but to no avail. Clarke rallied for a few hours, and then died on May 17th at the age of fifty-four, leaving his widow, Catherine Lockwood Clarke, the only daughter of the

¹Sykes, Elogium, p. 10.

Rector of Little Massingham, Norfolk, and four of his seven children as survivors.

A quiet service, conducted by Clarke's friend and assistant, A. A. Sykes, was held at St. James' in the evening. Although the Church itself was badly destroyed by bombing during the second World War, the records have been saved, and one may see among the names of those who died in the year 1729, the simple entry of the name of Samuel Clarke, D. D., rector.¹

It has been stated that many of Clarke's contemporaries thought most highly of him; but what of the more modern writers looking at him through the perspective of time?

¹Upon Clarke's death, a poem, The Christian Priest, was presented to the Vestry of St. James'. It is "A Poem sacred to the memory of the truly Reverend, Learned and Pious Dr. Samuel Clarke,..." with the dedication signed R. W. Although the poetry is not of the best, it sums up the life and ministry of Clarke. Bishop Moore knew his piety, it says, and would not pass judgement upon him by signing the judgement against Scripture-Doctrine; Clarke's life had been the best commentary on his rule of faith; he was reverend and religious, his face was not severe, he was mild of speech, had a sweet and pleasing sanctity, preached the joys of heaven and the pains of hell, warned the sinner, but dwelt on the eternal mercy. In all branches of science he was benevolent in truth and mind, his pious labours rescued true faith in Christ. He had a sweet, easy and charitable temper.

Here again one may see how the man was lauded by those who knew him.

Leslie Stephen says of him

"Samuel Clarke was a man of sufficient intellectual vigour to justify a very high reputation, and his faults were those which are less obvious to the eyes of contemporaries than of posterity. He was deficient in originality and acuteness. He had perspicuity enough to avoid some of the extravagances of the school to which he belonged, but not enough to detect its fundamental fallacies. His contemporaries might therefore regard him as a bold, yet wary, logician; to us he appears to be a second-rate advocate of opinions interesting only in the mouths of the greater men who were their first and ablest advocates."¹

Stephen goes on to say that in his interpretation of foreign doctrines, Clarke softened and enervated them, making them no more reasonable than they had been before.

On the other hand, Sorley says that Samuel Clarke was a prominent figure in the whole philosophical movement, and one of the earliest to attain eminence.² Clarke was, in his day, the most prominent figure in British philosophy and theology, although he was tainted by rationalism. He was a representative

¹Stephen, L., History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, p. 119.

²Sorley, Op. Cit., p. 155.



of the a priori method in both fields.¹ Clarke felt that Christianity was much more valid than Deism and should replace it. He therefore joined the opposition to demonstrate the inherent fallacy in this school of thought.

Sorley's summary of his esteem of Clarke is in comparative agreement with that of Stephen. He says:

"Samuel Clarke was not a man of original genius; but by sheer intellectual power, he came to occupy the leading position in English philosophy and theology. He touched the higher thought of the day at almost every point. The new physics, deism, the Trinitarian controversy, biblical and classical study - all occupied him."²

There is no disagreement between the contemporaries of Clarke and the modern critics as to his place as the first English metaphysician after Locke's death. His a priori philosophy was opposed to the spirit of Locke's teaching, and he rejected the sceptical conclusions of Locke's disciples; but both had been influenced by the same school.

"Clarke does not refer to Locke; but

¹For an excellent discussion of Clarke and his philosophical thought, see Zimmermann, Samuel Clarke's Leben und Lehre.

²Sorley, Op. Cit., p. 155.

"both seem to have been influenced by Cudworth, and their views may be compared. Both held (1) that moral relations are apprehended intuitively, (2) that they are to be conceived as laws of God, (3) that they need reinforcement by religious sanctions. They differ, however, in the way in which they would have interpreted the second point. Locke speaks, indeed, of the ideas of God and ourselves as the 'foundations of our duty'; but his examples of moral rules do not in any way involve the idea of God (ESSAY, IV, iii, 18). Clarke, on the other hand, attempts to show 'how the nature and will of God himself must be necessarily good and just,' and he holds that the difference between good and evil is 'antecedent to all laws' (BEING AND ATTRIBUTES...p. 125) - whereas Locke's notion of moral good and evil depends upon a reference to law (II, xxviii, 5). He would have agreed with Locke's statement that moral knowledge is concerned with 'the congruity and incongruity of the things themselves' (III, xi, 16), but Locke's reason for this statement - that these 'moral things,' being 'mixed modes', are of 'man's making' (III, ix, 15) -¹ would not have satisfied him."

Not only was Clarke influenced by Cudworth: he was also influenced by the Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza and Leibnitz schools, his work being the principal literary result of the speculative movement from which

¹Ibid, footnote p. 158.

the contemporary English deism also developed. He was followed by both orthodox and non-orthodox Rationalists.¹

Clarke deduced moral law from logical necessity, and,

"Clarke's theory of morality has exerted a more permanent influence, and shows more traces of originality, than any of his other doctrines. He had an idea of a moral universe constituted by moral relations, analogous to the physical relations of the physical universe. There are certain 'fitnesses of things' over and above their merely physical relations: 'there is' he says, 'a fitness or suitableness of certain circumstances to certain persons, and an unsuitableness of others, founded in the nature of things and in the qualities of persons, antecedent to will and to all arbitrary or positive appointment whatsoever.' Many illustrations are given of these 'relations of things'; but their nature is not further explained. 'Fitness,' 'agreement', 'suitableness' are the terms by which they are described. They differ, therefore, from the causal relations with which physical science is concerned. They indicate...a moral aspect of reality. But they are known in the same way - by reason. ... And, so far as they are intelligent, all reasonable beings guide their conduct by them. God is a free being; but, being rational, it is impossible that he can act against them: he is, therefore, necessarily

¹Stephen, Dictionary of National Biography, "Samuel Clarke".

"good. The same relations ought to determine human conduct; but the will of man is deflected by his passions and particular interests, and his understanding is imperfect, so that moral error is possible and common. For this reason also the obligation of virtue needs the support of religion."¹

Sidgwick maintains that Clarke tried to "place morality among the sciences capable of demonstration, from self-evident propositions as incontestable as those in mathematics", and "...that the cognition of self-evident practical propositions is in itself, independently of pleasure and pain, a sufficient motive to a rational being as such for acting in accordance with them."² He continued by pointing out that Clarke tried to press the analogy between ethics and mathematics to such an extent that he often failed to distinguish between what was and what ought to have been.

Although he said that pleasure and pain are not necessary as motives, Clarke was not ready to maintain that preferring pleasure or happiness to unhappiness or pain is irrational. "Even in Clarke's system, where Indeterminism is no doubt a cardinal notion, its

¹Sorley, Op. Cit., p.157.

²Sidgwick, Outline of the History of Ethics for English Readers, p. 179.

importance is metaphysical rather than ethical; Clarke's view being that the apparently arbitrary, particularly in the constitution of the physical universe, is really only explicable by reference to creative free-will."¹

Sidgwick also believes that Clarke had a doubleness of purpose.

"He is anxious to show both that moral rules are binding independently of the sanctions that divine legislation has attached to them, and also that such rules are laws of God, with adequate sanctions attached to their observance and violation;..."

Both views are necessarily connected, and as God is just, ill deserts will be punished and good ones rewarded.

His four chief rules of righteousness are:

"(1) Piety towards God, (2) Equity and (3) Benevolence towards our fellows, and (4) the rule of duty to a man's own self, which he calls Sobriety. The last of these rules, as defined by Clarke, is manifestly not primary and independent in its obligation, ... and in the exposition of the Rule of Piety he hardly attempts the precision which his mathematical analogy suggests. It is rather in the rules of Equity and Universal Benevolence - which, in Clarke's view, sum up social duty - that the force and significance of this analogy appears. The principle of Equity - that 'whatever I judge reasonable or unreasonable for another to do for me, that by the same judgement I declare reasonable or unreasonable that I in the like case

¹Ibid, p.262.

"should do for him' - has undoubtedly a certain resemblance to a mathematical axiom: and the same may be said of the principle that a greater good is to be preferred to a less, whether it be my good or another's - ..."¹

Philosophy and bare reason cannot reform mankind effectually without assistance from some higher principle.² Thus it is that we may now turn to the theological thought of Clarke. Here, he occupied the middle of the road between the orthodox views and those of the deists. The orthodox condemned him for preaching disguised deism in spite of his avowed differences with the members of this school of thought; the deists for retaining orthodox phraseology and the historical element of belief. His adaptation of the deist method was said to be applied to the colourless doctrine he identified with Christianity, and because of this, some called him a Christian deist, although he maintained so many relevant arguments against this group of thinkers.³

As the chief intellectual light of the Low Church party, he collected around him followers who were for

¹Ibid, p. 179ff.

²Clarke, Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 195 f.

³Waterland, Works, Vol. V, p. 544.

the most part from his University, and together they entered into much controversy, the disciples at times being more vociferous than their leader. This was especially true of the Trinitarian controversy. Wollaston, Price, Whiston, Sykes, Jackson and Balguy were among his devoted adherents: Hoadly was an intimate friend and admirer of Clarke. He was also Clarke's biographer. Almost without exception, these men are remembered but dimly today, and this only in dusty tomes or in a sentence or two in some very detailed, technical book. But in spite of their obscurity at the present day, during their life-time they were very faithful and quick to defend Clarke and his Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity with their pens and voices.

Although some of the theological views of the Church of England were close to those of Roman Catholicism, Clarke was most outspoken against the Roman Catholic Church, casting harsh aspersions wherever he could.¹ He was fully Protestant in his view that the Scriptures are the only rule of faith, each person being permitted to interpret the Scriptures according to his best understanding of them after studying them with the

¹Clarke, Works, Vol. 3, pgs. 678, 709, and others.

help of all possible guides.

Clarke was ready to admit that an heretical position might be arrived at and substantiated by picking proof texts out of their context. In speaking of this point he said,

"St. Chrysostom observes concerning the antient Hereticks that tho' their Opinions were never so widely different, both from the Truth and from each Other, yet everyone pretended that his particular Opinion was agreeable to the Scripture and founded in it;... He observes further, That the true reason of this their Confidence was, because every one picked out of Scripture all those passages, which, according to the Letter and the Sound of the Words, seemed to favour his particular Opinion, without regarding their Coherence and Connexion, or the Occasion and Design of their being written. Thus from those Passages which speak of Christ as a Man, and in his State of Humiliation, some were so unreasonable as to collect that he was but a Meer Man, and so denied his Divinity: Others, on the contrary, from those Passages which speak of him as God and in his state of Exaltation, did as weakly take occasion to deny his Humanity; asserting that the Human Nature was wholly swallowed up by the Divine."¹

Yet, with this admission, he still believed it to be

¹Ibid, 3 Practical Essays etc., p.1. Clarke's italics are here omitted for ease of reading.

better to use one's own intelligence with the helps available, than to have one's beliefs dictated.

Each man should arrive at his own beliefs through study, as "the ultimate design and desire of Man, is Happiness; and as the only way to this Happiness is Religion, so the knowledge of that Religion ought to be at least our principal and first study."¹ The true end and design of religion, for Clarke, was to make men wiser and better; to improve, exalt and perfect their nature; to teach them to obey, love and imitate God, and cause them to extend their love, goodness and charity to their fellow beings.² It is religion which differentiates man from the inferior orders of creatures, and on it are built all hopes of future life and happiness hereafter.³ Religious men--and all men are obliged to be religious⁴--become seekers after truth, as religion is founded on truth. The true religion is one of nature in general, and Christ in particular,⁵ and is arrived

¹Clarke, Sermons, Vol. VI, p.133. (Sermon #5)

²Clarke, 17 Sermons on Several Occasions, p.1f.

³The English Preacher, Vol.3, p.159f.

⁴Clarke, "3 Practical Essays etc.", Works, V.3, p.577

⁵The English Preacher, Vol. 3, p.194.

at by gradual progress.¹ When known or gross sins are no longer committed, the religious life begins. This does not mean that man is born in sin: a baby is innocent.² Sin comes with understanding. Although the religious life begins in this way, it is vain to profess religion unless one knows the commands, Being, and Attributes of God; believing in God first, and through this belief, coming to believe in Christ.³ Man must love God, both fearing and trusting Him, expressing these emotions in worship.

"A true love of God, must be founded upon the right sense of his perfections being really amiable in themselves, and beneficial to us: and such a love of God will of necessity shew forth itself, in our endeavouring to practice the same virtues ourselves, and exercise them towards others, which we profess to love and admire in him."⁴

Love of God signifies duty to Him, worship, faith and trust in Him, and thus righteousness to other men.

Fear of God means awe and regard which arises in the mind of man when he believes in an omnipresent

¹Clarke, "3 Practical Essays etc.", p.568.

²Ibid, p. 557.

³The Practical Preacher, Vol. 1, p.34.

⁴Ibid. p. 36.

Governor of perfect justice, holiness and purity, who approves good and detests evil, rewards what He approves and punishes what He hates; being endued with infinite goodness. This is the sort of fear which is the foundation of religion. Superstition is a fear of man knows not what, and although true Christianity rules out superstition, there is a remnant in the Roman Catholic worship of saints and the use of statues.¹

What then did Clarke feel is man's duty? To do that which truly and universally promotes happiness is his chief duty, and the performance of duty is the natural and direct means to attain true and lasting happiness.² Men must have the highest honour, esteem and veneration for God which will express itself in their actions. They must worship and adore God, and Him alone.³

Man is good and kind by nature;⁴ thus wars are against his nature. Clarke spoke out against wars not solely because they suppress man's liberties, but also because only through fear and love of God and obeying

¹The English Preacher, Vol.3, pp182f, 194.

²Ibid, p. 80.

³Clarke, Works, Vol.II, p. 618.

⁴Clarke, 17 Sermons on Several Occasions, p.6.

His commands can man have the foundations for that solid peace and satisfaction in which a rational and immortal spirit can aquiesce¹ and man's true nature thus come to the fore. It is man's duty to seek peace even if the government under which he lives is bad, and he must fight for this peace because both liberty, which comes with it, and religion are worth fighting for.

To avoid big evils, small ones must be prevented. Self-control--supression of corrupt affections and restraint of inordinate appetites--is the way to achieve this.² These passions are not bad in and of themselves, but when a man succumbs to passion, he loses reason.³ Material things are not wrong as goals if they are subordinated to virtue and religion.⁴ Man is a free moral agent and exercises free will;⁵ therefore he may disregard duty or reject the Gospel if he wishes to do so. If man chooses to do so, however, he is choosing the course of utter folly, as the due performance of the

¹English Preacher, p. 80f.

²Clarke, 17 Sermons..., p. 134.

³Ibid, p. 145.

⁴Practical Preacher, Vol. 1, p.140.

⁵Clarke, Works, Vol. II, p.678.

duties relative to life is the principal means of obtaining the blessings of the present world and happiness in the one which is to come.¹ To some of Clarke's contemporaries, this was a stumbling block. Man's free will did not seem to be consistent with the idea of God's foreknowledge of future events. Either one must maintain the idea of foreknowledge, or else one must say that man has free will, and therefore God can only know that a thing will probably happen, not that it is certain to do so. In standing firm in the belief in man's free will, Clarke said that although God can subdue all things and people unto Himself, He will not do so, as He wants intelligent and moral agents to obey their own wills: wills with which He endows all of His children. The more improved their virtue, that is, the more truly Christian individuals become, the more their wills become attuned to God's and the more delighted they become to do His will: they become more perfect.²

When a man becomes a Christian, his zeal for the better life speaks for him. True zeal, a virtue of the Christian, is distinguished from its false counterpart

¹Family Lectures, "On Prayer".

²Clarke, Works, Vol. 3, p.701.

by the object about which it is employed, the manner and circumstances in which it expresses itself, and the end toward which it is directed.¹ Covetousness may be mistaken for frugality; profuseness pass for generosity and so forth. People with these characteristics profess to know God, but their works deny their words. Some believe in the future judgement, but continue to live viciously, each sin making the commission of another one easier, as the person becomes hardened to sin by sinning.² Christians should, on the other hand, live as becomes their professed religion, giving glory to God and thus promoting virtue and righteousness in the world. All that is immoral or hurts the conscience of the person acting, or of others led to do the same, is against the glory of God.³ If one knows a thing not to be true, and says that it is true, one is lying, and a lie is a sin as much as the devil is falsity and God truth.⁴ Such a sin must affect man's own conscience, even if it hurts

¹English Preacher, Vol.3, p. 163.

²Ibid, Vol. 1, pp. 71 and 76.

³Practical Preacher, Vol. 1, p. 139.

⁴Family Lectures, "On Prayer". This may also be found in Practical Preacher, p. 140.

no other man.

Clarke was certain of resurrection, and constantly assured his parishioners of it. He held out to them the hope of an intermediate state immediately following death, which is happy for the good, but, he said, is even happier after the resurrection.¹

What then of the sinner? Just as God is ready to show forth wrath upon the wicked and unrighteous, even to the extent of sending a plague as judgement, so He is quick and eager to forgive the truly penitent. Repent, or you perish in a physical Hell ! This was Clarke's cry as he informed those who listened to him that man is not predestined to heaven or hell, as God, our just Father, will change the verdict as a man changes his way of life.² Part of man's duty as a Christian is to pray, to thank God for the good things received and to ask Him for what he needs. Through prayer God can and will hear the penitent, and not reject him.³ Through prayer man becomes prepared to receive God's

¹Clarke, 17 Sermons..., "Sermon...Funeral of Lady Cooke."

²Clarke, Works, Vol. 1, p.68.

³Family Chaplain, "On Rogation Sunday."

blessing.¹ Every man must judge himself, but dare not judge his brother. There are cases in which the heart is deceitful to one's self as well as to others: God alone can judge a man,² both works and faith being judged. The Roman doctrine of merit is not the full truth, as "our best Virtues or Works are so imperfect as to need Pardon, rather than deserve a Reward"³.

Clarke does not believe that man is justified by works alone. He says that man is justified by faith,⁴ but he also says that the constant impact of God on men's minds will be reflected in their actions.⁵

God is revealed in nature as well as by Christ. Natural philosophy gives the strongest evidence of God's continual government of the world;⁶ and by contemplation of nature, men are led to the knowledge of the God of nature.⁷ Men know by nature THAT God is to be worshipped,

¹Clarke, Works, Vol. 3, p. 695f.

²Clarke, Sermons, Vol. 1, p. 257. (Sermon XI)

³Ibid, Vol. IV, p. 317.

⁴Clarke, Works, Vol. 3, p. 594.

⁵Ibid, p. 678.

⁶Sykes, Elogium, p. 2.

⁷Clarke, Works, Vol. 3, p. 681.

but not HOW He is to be worshipped.¹ Nature does not tell man that God forgives sins. Therefore there arises from nature no comfort for sinners. There was necessity for some particular revelation to discover what expiation God would accept,² and this may be found in the Christian religion which is a revelation.³ Revelation is needed to present the great motives of religion, the rewards and punishment of a future state.⁴

Clarke does not omit the Church in his plan of the Christian life. He feels that although man is not born in sin, he must still be brought to the Church and he must be baptized, even though baptism is not necessary for the child's salvation.

"... at Baptism God always bestows that Grace, which is necessary to enable Men to perform their Duty; and that to those who are Baptized in their Infancy, this Grace is sealed and assured at Confirmation. That from henceforward Men are bound, with that Assistance, to live in the constant Practice of their known Duty and are not to expect (except in extraordinary Cases) any extraordinary much less

¹Clarke, Evidences of...Rel., pp.178,199,200.

²Ibid, pp.182-3, 200.

³Clarke, "3 Practical Essays", Works, Vol.3, p.578.

⁴Clarke, Evidences of...Rel., p. 200.

"irresistable Grace, to preserve them in their Duty, or to convert them from Sin; That after this they fall into any Great Wickedness, they are bound to a proportionately Great and Particular Repentance. And that as the Gospel hath given sufficient Assurance of such Repentance being accepted, to comfort and encourage all true Penitents; so it has sufficiently shown the Difficulty of it at all times, and the extreme danger of it when late, to deter Men from delaying it when they are convinced of its Necessity, and from adding to their Sins when they hope to have them forgiven."¹

Baptism is the rite of admitting those who believe in Christ into the membership of the Church: a means of reminding man that Christ's death and resurrection promote the end of the Gospel which is to bring men to a newness of life: but for infants it is a covenant which, at the age of discretion, must be confirmed by the child. It is for this reason that Confirmation is necessary, and it is after Confirmation that the child becomes a full communicating member of the Church.

Communion, or the Lord's Supper, is a commemoration of the Last Supper, in the Church of England, ... "do this as oft as ye shall..in remembrance of

¹Clarke, Works, Vol.3, "3 Practical Essays", last page of preface. Clarke's italics are purposely omitted.

me."¹, and Clarke was in full agreement with the Church in this too. It is not, like baptism, appointed for the remission of sins, but it is the commemoration of the allsufficient sacrifice once offered for eternal expiation. Clarke felt that if the Church had allowed this Sacrament to be used for the remission of sins it would invite more sin.²

Sacraments--in the Church of England baptism and the Lord's Supper-- are instituted as means and aids to keep men steadfast in their moral duties.³

Ritual and ceremony are good only in-so-far as they do not clash with the just and real necessities of life. Thus Clarke began his discourse on Mark 2:27. He continued by saying that the Sabbath was primarily instituted as a commemoration of creation; for the Jews to commemorate their deliverance from Egypt; as an appropriate time of rest; as a special time set aside for the worship of God and instruction in His will for man.⁴

Clarke spoke of God as the Supreme Being who

¹Book of Common Prayer, "Communion".

²Clarke, Sermons, Vol. IV, p.133f.(Sermon VI)

³Clarke, Works, Vol.3, p.580.

⁴Family Chaplain, "On Rogation Sunday."

had existed from eternity, who created all and is represented as Glory, Majesty, and Omnipotence. God is an immanent God, who observes all of our words and actions and who truly and sincerely tries to make men happy.¹

"To see God, is to behold and contemplate those glorious Perfections, of infinite Goodness, Purity, and Truth; and to enjoy God, is so to love and adore those amiable Perfections, as to be transformed into the Likeness and Resemblance of them."²

Again he said:

"There is but one God; one Eternal, Omnipresent, Self-sufficient Being of infinite Power, Knowledge, Wisdom and Goodness: The Maker, Governour and Judge of the Universe; the Author and God of Nature;... manifests Himself to all nations; ...he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."³

It is He, and He alone, whom men must fear, love, worship, thank, trust, call upon in prayer and serve: whose name and word men must honour. It is He alone who is able to supply man's wants, who is the author of every good gift, the all-seeing Judge, Author and Creator of all things, above all and in all, through all and in all

¹Clarke, Works, Vol.3, p. 586.

²Family Chaplain, "On Rogation Sunday".

³Clarke, Works, Vol.3, p. 677.

men. No man has seen, nor can man ever see the King and Lord of the whole universe.¹ He is unchangeable, independent, self-existent, and necessarily existent. He is infinite, everywhere present, indivisible and incorruptible. He is one, an intelligent Being, infinitely wise, with power to communicate to His creatures liberty, freedom of will, and the power to begin motion.²

The Father is absolute and has incommunicable supremacy.³ This emphasizes Clarke's position concerning the relation of the Father to the Son, who, he says in proposition twelve, derives His Being and all His attributes from the Father.

The Son was sent of God with whom He had existed before the world or ages,⁴ to reveal God to mankind, and to promote the Glory of God: to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.⁵ He is ever putting away sin and is the Mediator. (Throughout Clarke's works, this Mediatorial position of our Lord is stressed.) Christ

¹Ibid, pp.695-99.

²Clarke, Being and Attributes of God.

³Clarke, Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity.

⁴Ibid, propositions XV and XLIX.

⁵Family Lectures, Vol. 2, "On Prayer."

set an example of a more perfect and holy life, and, as He reveals God, He also makes clearer what the wrath of God can mean to the ungodly and unrighteous.¹ His death and passion were the expiation for past sins,² and brought redemption and reconciliation for sinners.³ Christ then advanced to the right hand of the Father, although not in a corporeal position, and now men have an advocate with the Father: a Great High Priest and intercessor through whom men have access to the Father,⁴ and who rules His Church through the mission of the Holy Spirit. He will sit in Judgement on that terrible Judgement day which is yet to come. Man has not seen the resurrection of Christ, but it has been proved to him.⁵

At the resurrection, Christ recovered the glory that had been His before He voluntarily took upon Himself the form of a servant, coming to earth as a human

¹Family Chaplain, Vol. 1, p.302.

²Clarke, Works, Vol.3, p.589.

³Clarke, Scripture-Doctrine..., 3rd ed.,p.xiii.

⁴Clarke, Works, Vol. 3,p.696, and Family Chaplain, "On the Ascension of Our Lord". Article 2 of the 39 Articles of the Church of England says that Christ took on "flesh, bones and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man's nature;" and therewith rose to sit at the right hand of God the Father.

⁵Clarke, Works, Vol.3, p.580.

being.¹

In spite of any criticism that may be made of Clarke's manner of expressing his ideas, and no matter how much one may disagree with certain points he made, one must grant that he was sincerely convinced that our Lord Jesus Christ is Divine.²

Wheatly claims too that Clarke was thoroughly convinced of the divinity of Christ, stating that he lived and died with this confession.³

Clarke also was convinced of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. He did not believe that there were three individual Persons in the sense of Beings, as he felt this would be tritheism. In proposition four of The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, Clarke maintains that the Scriptures never declare what the metaphysical nature, essence or substance of the three Persons is, and distinguishes them always by their personal characters, attributes, offices and powers.

It was with a deep sense of reverence and

¹Ibid, Vol.4, p. 332.

²Illustration of this may be found in Scripture-Doctrine..., propositions 2, 15, 16, 18, 24, 27 (especially) 33, 38, and 47.

³Wheatly, The Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, p.157f.

prior study that Clarke approached the writing of the book that he felt would simplify for the ordinary man that point of doctrine so central to our Christian faith; The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity.

Clarke was very much the product of his age, as were those with whom he carried on the Trinitarian Controversy. He had a good mind, trained in the current schools of thought: both philosophical and theological. Although unoriginal, he was able to organize material to advantage. Mediocre as seen through the perspective of the years, nevertheless he was considered a learned man in his day, and one to be reckoned with. That his works were widely read is proved by the number of controversies in which he was involved, and the speed with which his Trinitarian views spread abroad after the publication of his book.

CHAPTER III

THE SCRIPTURE-DOCTRINE AND THE CONTROVERSY

Controversies come and controversies go, but the truth survives no matter how much it is beaten by the hammer of polemic. It is as John Clifford has so aptly phrased it in his poem, The Anvil-God's Word.

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor
Old hammers, worn with beating years of
time.

"How many anvils have you had?" said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then, with twinkling
eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so, thought I, the anvil of God's Word,
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was
heard,
The anvil is unharmed-the hammers gone.

It is now our duty and privilege to examine the

hammer, which had, if the simile may be stretched, Clarke's book, The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity as its handle.

"There's no part of the Christian Faith has produc'd so many Disputes and Controversies, such numerous Variety of Opinions and Sects, as the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity."¹

What is meant by the term "Trinity" today? W. A. Brown says that "By the Trinity we mean that form of stating the doctrine of God which has resulted historically from the recognition of Jesus as the supreme revelation of God, together with the experience of God's present working which was the result of the new insight he brought."² Both Nicene and Athanasian Creeds distinguish three aspects or elements which are included in the one God; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Athanasius believed that Christ was pre-existent; Arius believed that there was a time when Christ did not exist--He had a beginning, and therefore was not eternal--but the Father had always existed.

It was this latter view that caused the changing

¹Gastrell, Some Considerations Concerning the Trinity, p.1.

²Brown, W. A., Christian Theology in Outline, p.139.

of the Creed at the Council of Nicea in 325 A. D. This was done by adding "begotten, not made, of one essence (homoosion, ὁμοούσιον) with the Father". In the Nicene Creed, it is denied that Christ is a creature, even the highest creature.

The subsequent Arian controversies continued the debate as to whether the three persons were ὁμοῖοι, (homoios) of the same, or ὁμοιούσιον (homoiouios) of like substance. The former expression is ambiguous in that it can mean the common possession of the same nature, or substance, by two different beings, or it can be carried to the extent of affirming absolute identity.

The controversy instigated by the book published by Clarke in 1712 with such high intentions, was the successor to, or, if you will, the renewing of, the one in which Bishop Bull (1634-1710) had led the orthodox writers in their defence of the doctrine of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ against assailants both at home and abroad. Not only did the earlier dispute help to lay the foundation for the later one, but Clarke quotes freely from the works of Bull, both in the Scripture-Doctrine..., and in subsequent defences of his own position.

While the latter controversy was labeled "Arian",

the former attempted to dispel Socinian ideas. Most of the writers taking part in this argument were either Dutch or English, and it is doubted whether Bull would have become embroiled without the incentive of the learned Dutch polemicists, as the English men were mediocre scholars, trying to make up in numbers what they lacked, individually, in quality.¹ The chief supporters of Anti-Trinitarianism in England were Biddle, Firmin and Gilbert Clerke, as well as some anonymous writers: men whose names have long since been forgotten. Two fairly good publications did appear in the 1690's. They were published anonymously, but now The Naked Gospel is attributed to Dr. Bury, and An Historical Vindication of the Naked Gospel is attributed to Le Clerc who later wrote An Abstract and Judgement of Dr. Clarke's Polemical or Controversial Writings (1713).

It was Bull's intention to show by accurate investigation that the Nicene and Anti-Nicene Fathers must have had as their doctrines those which were the true, primitive articles of the Christian Faith, handed down by the Apostles to their successors in the Church. His first great work, Defensio Fidei Nicenae, was

¹Van Mildert, Waterland's Works, Vol.1, pgs.36-44.

principally directed against Petravius, a Jesuit; Zwicker, a Socinian; and Sandius, an Anti-Trinitarian. Judicium Ecclesiae Catholocæ then followed to show that the Nicene Fathers maintained that the belief in Christ's divinity was one of the indispensable conditions of the Catholic Communion. His last great work, a treatise called Primitiva et Apostolica Traditio, was a continuation of this theme, and investigated Zwicker's charge that Christ's Divinity, Pre-existence and Incarnation were all inventions of some earlier heretics.

Bull's polemical victory was decisive, but did not entirely quell the controversial spirit now so universally prevalent. His responses were made with proofs from Scripture and antiquity, and not from elaborate metaphysical essays unless these were found to be necessary to illustrate the writings of the primitive Fathers which he brought forward to support his own argument.

Among the heretics the orthodox have always had to combat there were, in addition to the Socinians, the Sabellians, Arians, and men with ideas which, if followed through, would lead to Tritheism. The orthodox have had to convince these people of the great truths of our Lord's pre-existence, eternity and consubstantiality with the

Father. Great care had to be exercised in speaking of the subordination of the Son to the Father, so as not to lead to misrepresentation or misconception.¹ All this led to attempts to explain and illustrate those doctrines of the creed which were based upon hypothesis rather than upon historical fact. This then became Bull's task.

Dr. William Sherlock (1641-1707) wrote, in answer to two Socinian tracts, A Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity which was published in 1690. In this work, he proposed a new mode of explaining the great mystery by a hypothesis designed to make easy and intelligible the idea of the Trinity in Unity. His modus operandi was disapproved of by those on both sides of the argument, and he was accused of Tritheism.

Wallis and South also advanced new ideas which were condemned as Sabellianism; and, with the Sherlock-Wallis-South ideas in mind, the government of Great Britain outlawed novel opinion, requiring the people to adhere to those explications already having the sanction of the Church.

As is usual in any controversy, labels were found to be necessary. Sherlock's group became Tritheists,

¹Ibid, p. 39.

and the Wallis-South group, Nominalists or Nominal Trinitarians. These names were readily adopted by the Socinians as terms of reproach. They now had a new weapon, and tried to show that all who were Trinitarians were involved in the errors of Tritheism or Sabellianism, maintaining that no intermediate theory of Trinitarian doctrine could consistently be maintained.

Firmin took advantage of the situation, and in 1691-95 he was particularly active in promulgating three small quarto volumes which were a collection of Socinian writings. As Bull had by now disappeared from the controversial scene, there was no good scholar to counter this attack. Eventually, however, a posthumous work by Bull, apparently written primarily for his private use, was published to answer Firmin. The subject of this work was Church doctrine for the first three centuries.

Bishop Bull had vanquished his contemporary opponents; but scarcely had his career ended before fresh ground was entered upon by an opponent of much more imposing character than any the Bishop had encountered: a person who would disagree with Bull for placing so much emphasis on the value of the writings of the early Fathers and so little on the Scriptures themselves, more than for his ideas on the Trinity. This man was

Samuel Clarke.

"It is an extraordinarily interesting fact in English theology, that the heretical tendencies of the eighteenth century owe their origin to a single book."¹

Thus it is that Colligan begins his discussion of Clarke. He claims that the breaking up of the theological opinion of the Protestant Dissenters began in 1712, the year in which Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity was first published, and after it had commenced to circulate. Clarke's thesis in this book was:

1. "There is One Supreme Cause and Original of Things; One simple, uncompounded, undivided, intelligent Agent, or Person; who is the Alone Author of all Being, and the Fountain of all Power.
2. With This First and Supreme Cause or Father of all Things, there has existed from the Beginning, a Second divine Person, which is his Word or Son.
3. With the Father and the Son, there has existed from the Beginning, a Third divine Person, which is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son.
4. What the proper Metaphysical Nature, Essence, or Substance of any of these divine Persons is, the Scripture has no where at all declared; but describes

¹Colligan, Eighteenth Century Nonconformity, p.52.

- "and distinguishes them always, by their PERSONAL Characters, Offices, Powers and Attributes.
5. The Father Alone is Self-existent; Underived, Unoriginated, Independent; made of None, begotten of None, Proceeding from None.
 6. The Father is the Sole Origin of Power and Authority, and is the Author and Principle of whatsoever is done by the Son or by the Spirit.
 9. The Scripture, when it mentions the One God, or the Only God, always means the Supreme Person of the Father.
 12. The Son is not self-existent; but derives his Being, and All his Attributes, from the Father, as from the Supreme Cause.
 15. The Scripture, in declaring the Son's Derivation from the Father, never makes mention of any Limitation of Time; but always supposes and affirms him to have existed with the Father from the Beginning, and before all Worlds.
 17. Whether the Son derives his Being from the Father, by Necessity of Nature, or by the Power of his Will, the Scripture hath no where expressly declared.
 18. The λόγος, the Word or Son of the Father, sent into the World to assume our Flesh, to become Man and die for the Sins of Mankind; was not the λόγος ἐνδίδωτο, the internal Reason or Wisdom of God, an Attribute or Power of the Father; but a real

"Person, the same who from the Beginning had been the Word, or Revealer of the Will, of the Father to the World.

19. The Holy Spirit of God does not in Scripture generally signify a mere Power or Operation of the Father, but more usually a real Person.
20. The Holy Spirit is not Self-existent, but derives his Being or Essence from the Father, (by the Son,) as from the Supreme Cause.
21. The Scripture, speaking of the Spirit of God, never mentions any Limitation of Time, when he derived his Being from the Father; but supposes him to have existed with the Father from the Beginning.
25. The reason why the Son in the New Testament is sometimes stiled God, is not so much on Account of his metaphysical Substance, how divine soever; as of his relative Attributes and divine Authority (communicated to him from the Father) over Us.
28. The Holy Spirit is described in the New Testament, as the immediate Author and Worker of All Miracles, even of those done by our Lord himself; and as the Conductor of Christ in all the Actions of his Life, during his State of Humiliation here upon Earth.
29. The Holy Spirit is declared in Scripture to be the Inspirer of the Prophets and

- "Apostles, and the Great Teacher and Director of the Apostles in the whole work of their Ministry.
32. The Person of the Holy Ghost, is no where in the Scripture expressly stiled, God, or Lord.
33. The Word, God in Scripture, never signifies a complex Notion of more persons [or Intelligent Agents] than One; but always means One person only, viz. either the person of the Father singly, or the person of the Son singly."¹

From this, Clarke concluded that:

34. "The Son, whatever his metaphysical Essence or Substance be, and whatever divine Greatness and Dignity is ascribed to him in Scripture; yet in This He is evidently Subordinate to the Father, that He derives his Being, Attributes and Powers from the Father, the Father nothing from Him.
37. The Son, how great soever the metaphysical Dignity of his Nature was, yet in the whole Dispensation entirely directed all his Actions to the Glory of the Father.
39. The Reason why the Scripture, though it stiles the Father God, and also stiles the Son God, yet at the same Time always declares there is but

¹Clarke, Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, 3rd ed. (Numbers refer to the fifty-five propositions.)

- "One God; is because, there being in the Monarchy of the Universe but One Authority, original in the Father, derivative in the One God (absolutely speaking) always signifies Him in whom the Power and Authority is original and underived.
42. The Holy Spirit, as he is Subordinate to the Father; so he is also in Scripture represented as Subordinate to the Son, both by Nature, and by the Will of the Father; excepting only that he is described as being the Conductor and Guide of our Lord, during his State of Humiliation here upon Earth.
43. Upon These Grounds, absolutely Supreme Honour is due to the Person of the Father singly, as being Alone the Supreme Author of all Being and Power.
45. And upon the same Account, whatever Honour is paid to the Son who redeemed, and the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us, must always be understood as tending finally to the Honour and Glory of the Father, by whose good pleasure the Son redeemed, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies us.
46. For, the Great Oeconomy, or the Whole Dispensation of God towards Mankind in Christ, consists and terminates in This; that as all Authority and Power is originally in the Father, and from him derived to the Son, and exercised according to the

"Will of the Father by the Operation of the Son and by the Energy of the Holy Spirit; and all Communications from God to the Creature, are conveyed through the Intercession of the Son, and by the Inspiration and Sanctification of the Holy Spirit: So on the contrary, All Returns from the Creature, of Prayers and Praises, of Reconciliation and Obedience, of Honour and Duty to God; are made in and by the Guidance and Assistance of the Holy Spirit, through the Mediation of the Son, to the Supreme Father and Author of All things."¹

Credit for much of the disruption and many of the new trends of thought among the Dissenters of the early eighteenth century is given to the ideas gleaned from this one book. James Peirce of Newbury, Berks, was one of the first Presbyterian ministers to read Clarke's publication. It was this same Peirce who was in the centre of the Slater's Hall controversy, and through whom the doctrine of Presbyterianism is said to have been turned into the channels of Unitarianism: a fait accompli towards the end of the century.

In 1713, Peirce accepted a call to Exeter, and

¹Ibid.

was accused of bringing Clarkean ideas into the town when he came. This he denied, saying that the works of both Clarke and his fellow thinker, William Whiston, had been secretly read before his arrival, and thus the people of the town were already aware of the Clarkean position.

The first tangible indication that Peirce had adopted Clarke's Trinitarian views was to be found in his alteration of the Doxology in public worship. He also commenced to write and publish essays in controversy with others of his group on the subject of the Trinity.

As Clarke's views spread through the body of the Dissenters, two groups were formed which gradually grew apart from one another. By the spring of 1719, the final stage of this controversy was reached, culminating in the series of meetings held at the Slaters' Hall, called a "Synod". During these meetings, the dissenting ministers from both parties were present. The one party was conservative, advocating the importance of subscription to the doctrine of the Trinity; the other party took its stand on the opposite side; subscription was not necessary.

One result of these meetings was to bring to

light two important aspects of Protestant belief. They brought to light the Protestant attitude toward the symbols of the Catholic Faith, as well as toward the liberty of individuals to hold their own opinions in matters of religion.

Within the Established Church, Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity started a new era of polemics. He was not an Anti-Trinitarian, being convinced that the doctrine of the Trinity was a matter of revelation; therefore a Scripture Doctrine. His labours were directed to the proof of this doctrine, in the sense in which HE understood it, and he tried to prove that it was THIS sense which was taught by both the Scriptures and the Church of England, without resorting to metaphysical or abstract reasoning, or establishing a new system of doctrine. Unlike Bishop Bull, he did not attempt to prove anything from the writings of the early Church Fathers; indeed, he virtually, if not expressly, disclaimed the authority of the primitive writers as expositors of the doctrine in question. He quoted them only as the statements they made could serve as illustrations of points he was making; not as proofs of these points. He said:

"And I have illustrated each

"Proposition with many Testimonies out of the Antient Writers, both before and after the Council of Nice; Especially out of Athanasius and Basil; Of which, are several not taken notice of either by Petavius or the learned Bp Bull. Concerning all which, I desire it may be observed, that they are not alleged as Proofs of any of the Propositions, (for Proofs are to be taken from Scripture alone,) but as Illustrations only."¹

Much argument was put forward for and against Clarke's use of the writings of the primitive writers. Some were convinced that he quoted the Fathers in such a way that he was able to twist their meaning to fit his own ideas;² some said that his opinions were too close to those of the early Fathers;³ and still others felt that he did not use these sources sufficiently although the Fathers must have known the meaning of the Scriptures better than any men since then, as they had talked with the Apostles.⁴

Robert Nelson (1656-1715) objected that Clarke

¹Ibid, 1st ed., p.xvii; 2nd ed., p.xix f.

²Wheatly, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds; D., T., Free Thinking Proved Atheism; Dawson, Passage in Dedication of Suspiria Sacra.

³Wade, A Short Inquiry into the Doctrine of the Trinity.

⁴Wells, Remarks on Clarke's Introduction.

had not cited fully enough from Bull and the ancients. To this Clarke replied that he had no intentions of quoting them more fully, as the illustrations he had used suited his purpose admirably.¹

Edward Wells (1667-1727) felt that Clarke was too harsh with the early Christian writers, emphasizing too much the human aspects of the creeds and the other man-made rules of faith. Clarke replied to this that, as revelation had stopped after the writing of the Scriptures, to consider the words of the ancient Fathers as proofs in matters of controversy in this realm was to use fallible human beings as the final authorities in spiritual matters. As there are more than five hundred texts in the New Testament from which one may glean an understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, why should one turn to such fallible authority? The works of the Fathers might be used as aids to understanding the Scriptures, and may be consulted in the same manner as one would consult the works of any modern theologians, but nothing said by any other than the Scripture writers could be allowed to supersede these inspired

¹Clarke, Reply to Nelson, p. 4f.

writings.¹

Edward Welchman (1665-1739) accused Clarke of misrepresenting the Fathers, and he added to this accusation another one: namely, that Clarke tried to accommodate Scripture to his own ideas. Welchman laid this and other violations of the established rules of interpretation at the feet of Dr. Clarke in his Dr. Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity Examined.

Waterland too concerned himself with Clarke's treatment of the works of the Nicene and Anti-Nicene Fathers, and the Church Liturgy as well in his Queries. He attempted to point out the dangers of trusting to private judgement rather than to antiquity, Scripture and reason.

Thus it may be seen that so much controversy centred on these points as to make them almost as important as the doctrinal parts themselves; the material presented above being only a fraction of all that was said concerning the points in question.

Whether they agreed with Clarke that the Fathers could be used only to illustrate points taken from the Scriptures, or whether they thought the Fathers' words

¹Clarke, Letter to...Wells...in Answer to His Remarks etc.

to be final, all agreed that the doctrine of the Trinity should be examined in order to obtain a better understanding of this vital tenet of the Christian faith. This examination might mean that there would be a temporary disturbance of the peace of the Church, but the price would be a small one to pay for the ultimate result.

The professed design of Clarke's book was good, and it brought the argument on the doctrine of the Trinity back from the metaphysical side to more legitimate ground.¹ No matter how far wrong he may have been, even his most unyielding adversaries ought to thank Clarke for all the materials he has collected as well as for his way of arranging them. His great learning, acuteness and exactness of reasoning and his acquaintance with the primitive writers must also be acknowledged by friend and foe alike.²

After the first edition (1712) of Clarke's The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity had been the centre of argument for seven years, another edition appeared (1719) in which several changes and additions had been made, but in which the main points remained essentially

¹Van Mildert, Op. Cit., p.44f.

²Sykes, Elogium, p. 60f.

the same. The third edition appeared in 1732, after Clarke's death, but including his own changes. As he stated in the preface to this edition, there were several additions or changes made throughout it correcting all the errors he had found, and taking into consideration points to which others had taken exception in the earlier editions. The greatest change is to be found in part IV, chapter II; a change made in the 1719 edition, and remaining in the changed form in the last one. The trend of thought in this section is the same, but the phraseology and the material are quite different, being much more lucid in the revised form. It is this third edition which has been incorporated in Clarke's Works.

Clarke did not change his method of approach in the later editions, but based all of them on a three section outline. The first section is a collection of New Testament texts concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, with some exegesis of these passages; the second is divided into particular and distinct portions which set forth and explain the doctrine; the third is devoted to the examination of the principal passages in the liturgy of the Church of England relating to the doctrine of the Trinity.

Hunt concludes that "Clarke was clear for three persons in the Godhead, only they must not be co-eternal or independent, for that would be tritheism."¹ It is clear too that Clarke never doubted either the humanity or the divinity of Jesus Christ.

With this general view of the situation, it is now possible to examine it more closely, and to try to draw some conclusions as to whether or not Clarke really was an Arian and what his position was in his thinking about the subject of the Trinity.

In the Introduction, Clarke said that "The Christian Revelation, is ... the Will of God made known to Mankind by Christ, and by Those whom Christ intrusted with infallible Authority to teach it."² He felt that men should sincerely make use of their best understanding, and should use all helps available in order to understand this doctrine. Living instructors and the ancient writers may help to clarify more obscure ideas, thus aiding one to gain the comprehension being sought. However, none of the helps employed should be allowed to override the conclusions arrived at by the individual

¹Hunt, Religious Thought in England, p.24.

²Clarke, Scripture-Doctrine..., (all eds.)p.i.

himself. The doctrine of Christ and the Apostles is the only foundation upon which man can build, no man since having had any new revelation.¹ Christ's divine authority was proved by His performance of miracles: the Apostles proved their divine commission by their performance of miracles.

As for the authority of Scripture, Clarke said that "the Books of Scripture are to us Now not only the Rule, but the Whole and the Only Rule of Truth in matters of Religion."² To this Wells replies: it is both true and untrue, therefore a thing against which to warn the unwary reader. Only in matters of supernatural truth is it the whole and only rule, ruling only within its own sphere. The light of revelation comes from God to perfect the light of reason. Because God provides helps for us to understand the Scripture, man is obliged to use them in ascertaining the true meaning of it. Too much that is in the realm of reason has been given over to the Scripture and vice versa.

He admits, however, that it is the difference in interpretation of the Scripture which is the source of

¹Ibid, p.11. See also p. 92f above.

²Ibid.

controversy.¹

Clarke continued to clarify his position on the authority of rules of faith by stating that the rule taught in the Baptismal Creed does not in itself have authority, but is an extract containing all the things fundamental to, and universally needed by, all Christians. He felt that it was an indispensable epitome, as there are many points of Scripture which are too difficult for ordinary Christians to apprehend. These points are necessary for salvation; therefore there must be something to aid and guide men towards an understanding which is not merely blind acceptance of facts. It is the function of the Baptismal Creed, for example, to act as this aid and guide, rather than to be considered as a rule of faith in and of itself. Man must turn to the Scriptures with this guide, and he will then be more able to comprehend what he finds therein. In his Reply to Nelson, Clarke adds that creeds and other forms of words are means of obtaining uniformity and preventing disorder within the Churches.²

Although Clarke affirms that the Scriptures

¹Wells, Remarks on Clarke's Introduction, p.12.

²Clarke, Reply to Nelson, p.32 f.

are the only rule of faith,¹ Wells believed that he failed to show how the true sense of Scripture may be ascertained. He also maintained that Clarke did not guard against the perversion of the Scripture by which men put their own meaning into what they read, so that their own positions seem to be supported instead of basing their opinions solely on the authority of the Scripture.²

Clarke did admit that there is danger in allowing men to search the Scriptures themselves. This danger as Clarke saw it, was the same as that called to mind by Wells: taken out of context, any number of passages of Scripture may be found to substantiate any doctrinal view.³ He also stated that if men had been satisfied to accept Biblical revelation rather than to enter upon metaphysical speculation, the peace of the catholic

¹Clarke, Scripture-Doctrine..., 1719 edition, p. iv.

²Ibid, p.iii: "..., to preserve his Understanding from erring, he is obliged indeed, at his utmost peril, to lay aside all Vice and all Prejudice, and to make use of the best Assurances he can procure: But after he has done all that can be done, he must of necessity at last understand with his own Understanding, and believe with his own, not another's Faith."

³Ibid, p.37. This is the very thing of which men writing on both sides of the controversy were accused.

Church would have been maintained.¹ However, he did not feel that this danger was serious enough to persuade him to reject his thesis that the individual should search the Scriptures for himself.

Clarke's main reason for writing the Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity was that, as the foundation and main point of the Christian religion is the one which deals with the powers and offices of the Trinity and the respective honour due them from us, it is most important that all people should have an adequate understanding of the doctrine.

John Jackson (1686-1763) claimed that Clarke delivered an important point of Christian doctrine from the contradiction and confusion which had been introduced by metaphysical sophistry and the unintelligible jargon of the schools.²

In part one, there is a collection of 1251 Scripture texts which have been drawn from the New Testament to illustrate and prove points relating to the doctrine of the Trinity.

"The Method I used, was to set forth in One View ALL the Texts

¹Clarke, Scripture-Doctrine..., p.xxii.

²Jackson, Collection of Queries, dedicatory epistle.

"that in any manner related to the matter in Question; and, by comparing them together, I showed how they might All be reconciled in one uniform and consistent Scheme."¹

Wells, in his Remarks..., maintained that Clarke's introduction contained principles which might lead the unwary or unskilful reader astray, not only in matters relating to the Trinity, but also in reference to other controversies in the field of religion. His objection, in addition to those already stated, was that only New Testament texts were cited by Clarke, and yet he gave his book the title of Scripture-Doctrine: a most misleading thing to do.

Wells could not have read the title page very carefully, however, as it is indicated thereon that Clarke would consider only texts from the New Testament in his ensuing work.

Clarke's answer to Wells was that although the Old Testament contains prophecies of the coming Messiah, there is no text in it in which the doctrine of the Trinity is actually mentioned or revealed.²

He agreed with Wells that the New Testament is

¹Clarke, Reply to Nelson, p. 37.

²Clarke, Works, Vol.4, p225.

based on the Old Testament, and without its revelation man would not have been ready for the revelation of the New Testament. Nevertheless, in spite of Wells' accusation that he probably was unable to handle the language of the Old Testament¹--a false accusation to be sure--Clarke would not try to read into any of the Old Testament texts actual revelation of the Trinity.

This point became one of controversy, some siding with Clarke and saying that the Old Testament nowhere mentions the Trinity per se, and thus it is a fallacy to turn to it for doctrinal information. They maintained that the New Testament is the only source of this information.

Others, such as William Jones (1726-1800), tried to prove that there is an actual revelation of the Trinity in the Old Testament. These men contended that as the Jewish name for God, Elohim, is a plural noun, using plural verbs and adjectives, it must refer to the Trinity^{2,3}

¹Wells, Remarks on Clarke's Introduction, p.3.

²Gowen, A History of Religion, p.419, says "The plural name Elohim suggests a vaguely personalized aggregation of "powers", which must be recognized and propitiated at all likely places, such as springs, rocks and trees," Thus the use of this name goes backward into Animism, rather than forward into Christianity.

³Jones, The Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity, p.51.

Wells did not go quite as far as Jones in this matter.¹ He said that the Old Testament does not actually mention the Trinity, but that the plural form of Elohim might indicate some Trinitarian consciousness: the idea of the plurality of persons in the Godhead being implicit in its use.

No matter on which side the men were arguing, they were agreed that by searching the Scriptures, not only were they searching for truth, but they were also ensuring that the errors of Rome--dictated beliefs--would not be repeated.

One argument used against all the polemicists, Clarke included, was that they took texts out of context, thus reading into them the meaning of what they wished to predicate. However sound this line of reasoning may have been, it was used at such a time and in such a way as to indicate the lack of original thinking on the part of the reasoner, as well as a lack of anything more sound to say.

It has been said that Clarke's views, on the whole, displaced those found in the Athanasian Creed which defines the Trinity as a mystery transcending

¹Wells, Letter to Clarke...in Answer to His....

reason. God is one substance (ousia, phusis, natura, essentia, substantia) in whom there are three hypostases (subsistence, that which underlies a thing and gives it reality) or principles of distinction. These three are known as persons, but in a sense different from what we mean when we speak of "person". The meaning in the Trinity, according to this source, can be compared with the mask of an actor. All three persons are equal, but differ as to their hypostatic character. The Father is the Begetter, the Son Begotten, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from both. Each person shares the attributes of the other in such a way as to lose all before and after; beginning and ending; greater or lesser. Thus it is that there is no subordination.

Had Clarke been satisfied merely to change the disputable points rather than to propound an entirely new scheme, he would in all probability have been successful. Unfortunately, his cautious propositions failed to meet the demands of a sceptical age, and many, serving apprenticeship in the Clarkeian school advanced to the truly Arian position.¹ Colligan would not agree

¹Colligan, Eighteenth Century Non-Conformity, p.54. As has been stated (p. 90f above) Clarke did not intend to propound a new scheme.

that in and of itself the Scripture-Doctrine... was the cause of the revival of the Arian heresy, but he would agree that it was the indirect cause of that revival.

Williston Walker maintains that Clarke, in publishing his Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, intended to demonstrate Arian views by painstaking examination of the New Testament.¹ From the standpoint of both internal and external evidence, this would seem to be an incongruous statement. Clarke spoke out not only against the Socinians, the Sabellians and the Deists, but also against the Arians, and although his book may have demonstrated Arian concepts, it would seem to have been an unintentional happening.

Waterland, in speaking of the Modest Plea Cont'd, said that it had no particular scheme, but aimed towards Arianism.

"There are but three possible suppositions of God the Son considered as a real distinct Person. Either he is a man only, which to say is Socinianism; or he is more than man, but yet a precarious dependent being, depending as much on the will of the Father as any creature whatever, and consequently a creature; which to say is Arianism, and the whole

¹Walker, Op. Cit., p. 494.

"of Arianism, however variously expressed or differently disguised: the third supposition is, that the Son is necessarily existing, uncreated, and properly Divine, which is the Catholic doctrine."

He felt that the writer (Clarke) fluctuated between the second and third positions.¹

Nye believed that Clarke was not an Arian at all. He felt that God is three divine beings who rule in unanimous consent as just one God. He was of the opinion that, taken separately, many of Clarke's statements, such as propositions seventeen and thirty-four in The Scripture-Doctrine..., do point to the Arian view, but when all of Clarke's works are taken as a whole the picture changes. Nye's thesis was that Clarke believed the Divine Being to be so handicapped by the assumed flesh of the incarnation that He lacked the guidance and aid of another Divine Being. Each of the Divine Beings is God, not so much in respect of His substance as by His dominion of the world, and therefore Clarke gives the name God, not to a Being, but to a government managed by three Divine Beings. He continued to interpret Clarke's work by commenting that Clarke had said that the Son has all

¹Waterland, Eight Sermons, p. xxii.

Divine powers but supremacy and independence, and that these last are but titles or names. The supremacy of the Father comes through His being the original author of being and divinity; His independence through His being underived from any other. This is not real superiority, as all who have Divine Perfections whether derived (Son and Holy Spirit) or underived (Father) are truly and completely God. Again, by interpreting Clarke as having said that the Son derives His power from the Father with His nature and in His ineffable derivation, Nye denies the title of Arian for Clarke. Clarke equally rejects generation and creation by saying, as he did in propositions four, thirteen, seventeen and twenty-one that the Scriptures have not determined the manner in which the Son and the Holy Spirit derived from the Father. This derivation is the only superiority Nye can trace. He maintained that this is not Arianism. He further pointed to the fact that Clarke maintained that both the Son and the Holy Spirit have existed with the Father from the beginning, and all are co-equal with the exception, again, of the derivation of the first two mentioned from the Father. Although Clarke almost suggested Tritheism, he avoided it by asserting that the three persons--intelligent beings--form a monarchy to

rule the universe.¹ His summary of Clarke's assertions follows.

"His book asserts a Trinity of Divine Beings, Minds or Spirits; which is holding the Trinity in the highest degree and manner: but he concludes all with judging and advising, that as concerning these Articles and Questions, no more be absolutely required of any, but the first and only Creed of all the Antient Churches; even the Creed drawn up by all, or however some, of the Apostles."²

"Philotriados" maintained that Clarke was inconsistent, holding to the consubstantiality of the Son in his Boyle Lectures and the Paraphrases, thus being orthodox, then upholding the Socinian view in the Scripture-Doctrine... . It is interesting to note that at this point he accused Clarke of holding the Socinian view, but one page further on, he said that Clarke was reviving the Arian Heresy !³

Again: the title page of an anonymous work, Divine Worship Due the Whole Blessed Trinity..., has inscribed upon it "Among which are Interspersed Dr.

¹Nye, Explication of Articles of Divine Unity...

²Ibid, p. 97f.

³Philotriados, Speculum Clarkianum, p.ii.

SAMUEL CLARKE'S Censures of Arians, Socinians, &c. with divers Citations from his Writings; intending to shew what Concessions he made, and what near Advances to the true Catholic Faith."

A further view put forward was that Clarke was reviving the Arian heresy with qualifications to make it more palatable.

The book had hardly begun to circulate before Clarke was accused of applying his principles to introduce opinions irreconcilable with the received doctrines of the Church Universal and particularly those of the Church of England.

Part three, chapter one, is divided into five sections. The first lists passages from the liturgy of the Church of England in which the Father is called One or Only God; the second, where He is called Absolute; the third, where it is stated that prayers and praises should be offered through the mediation of the Son; the fourth, where the Son is spoken of as subordinate to the Father; and the last, where the Holy Spirit is spoken of as subordinate to the Father. This would tend to indicate that Clarke felt his doctrine to be in agreement with that of the Church up to this point, whether others did or not.

In the second chapter, Clarke discussed those passages he found to differ from his own views as stated in the first two parts, and he attempted to enlighten his reader about the method used to arrive at his conclusions.

In this chapter, the first point Clarke set before his public was that the Athanasian Creed had so many difficulties that it had become one of the principal reasons which caused students of theology to refuse to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles. Clarke did not believe that the Athanasian Creed was necessary for salvation, but from the use made of it by the Church, he felt that the Church believed that it WAS. Clarke based his unbelief on his knowledge--and he quoted a contemporary Church Historian--that the Athanasian Creed came into use in the year 800, thus being too late to have been written by Athanasius, and most important, that this creed is not found in the Scriptures. As Clarke believed that everything necessary for salvation was contained therein, it would have been most illogical for him to hold that any creed was necessary for salvation. He quoted many of the men reputed to be good churchmen and scholars to substantiate his views.

After this, there follow a number of passages

which Clarke felt to be inconsistent with those quoted in the first chapter, and also with the passages of Scripture quoted by him in the first part of The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity.

Clarke concluded by quoting more churchmen who agreed with him, that the sole way to avoid schism is to include in the Liturgy only such things as are agreed upon by all Christians.

Gastrell summed up concisely the position of Clarke in relation to that of the Church, as he saw it. He believed that Clarke maintained the Son to be God in every sense; equal to the Father in every sense in so far as equality can be derived from Him who is unbegotten by Him who is begotten. The Son and Holy Spirit have always been with the Father everywhere, and, through them, the Father rules and governs, and has always done so. Both the Son and the Spirit have and exercise all the power of the Father. The Divinity of the Son and the Spirit is none other than that which is derived from the Father; consequently there is no diminution of the unity of God. That there are three Persons can only mean that there is one Father Almighty, and with Him, in immediate union, and having communication of Being and Power from Him are the Son and the

Spirit, so He may, in His Person and by His Son and Spirit, manifest His Power, Glory and Majesty continually. This, said Gastrell, is not far from the view of the Church. The main difference was that Clarke used Intelligent Being and Person synonymously, and the conclusion drawn from that is that he believed there to be three divine persons who are different beings, individually distinct from each other and of different nature. The Church holds that all three are the same God, of the same nature and substance, and requires that all people believe in this Trinity in unity.

Clarke and the Church agreed that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. Clarke said that this does not mean that there are three Gods, and the Church says they are one God, which, said Gastrell, amounts to the same thing.¹

Immediately after the controversy had gained momentum, there were repercussions. The Lower House brought the case to the attention of the Bishops; men like Waterland, Wells, Nelson and others began to refute the views Clarke expounded; other books on the Trinity began to appear which had no outward connection with

¹Gastrell, Remarks on Dr. Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, pgs. 5-7.

Clarke or his book, but which expounded each author's opinion of what the TRUE doctrine of the Trinity was; and the non-conformists influenced by Clarke began to argue with the other non-conformists about subscription and the true meaning of the Trinity.

Although Hoadly, Whiston and Sykes were all silent about it, Lathbury said that in the spring of 1714, Clarke was reported to the Convocation for omitting parts of the Liturgy in his Services. For instance, Lathbury said, the people objected to Clarke's omission of the Lord's Supper on Trinity Sunday, which omission was due to the fact that Clarke did not want to read the proper preface to the Communion Service. Lathbury added that the Queen was offended, and had Clarke removed from the post of royal chaplain, as the omission of Liturgy and the appearance of The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity made it clear that he had some unorthodox ideas on the Trinity.¹

In the early summer of the same year, Clarke was brought before the Convocation because of his book and the replies he had made to those challenging it.

¹Lathbury, History of the Convocation of the Church of England, p.425. This is mentioned by Lathbury alone.

On June 2, 1714, the members of the Lower House wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of his province, then assembled in Convocation, to advise them of the circulation of Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity and several defences of this book. These contained assertions which they considered to be contrary to the Catholic faith, in regard both to opinions concerning the "Three Persons of One Substance, Power and Eternity, in the Unity of the Godhead" and to the tendency of these assertions to perplex the minds of men as they tried to worship according to the liturgy of the Church of England.¹ Another complaint they made was that many passages in the Thirty-nine Articles and in other places in the Book of Common Prayer which were diametrically opposed to such heretical assertions had been treated by Clarke in such a way as to allow those who were unstable and insincere to comply with the laws requiring them to assent to the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-nine Articles, and still retain the errors which were inconsistent with their declaration and subscription. The request made by the clergy of the Lower House of the Bishops was that they would take such

¹Lawrence, An Apology for Dr. Clarke, p.10.

action as would stop Clarke and his mischief... "these daring and dangerous Attempts, to subvert our Common Faith, to corrupt the Christian Worship, and to defeat the Church's main End..."¹

Two days later, the Bishops replied. They commended the zeal of the Lower House, and requested that the members thereof prepare an extract of the case with their observations thereon.

The Lower House settled to the task with the greatest celerity, and on the twenty-third of June they had the requested extract ready for their peers.

The clergy began their extract by stating that the whole drift of the book was offensive. They then continued, sighting the following as the particular points to which they objected.

"I. Assertions contrary to the Catholick Faith, as received and declared by this Reformed Church of England, concerning Three Persons of One Substance, Power and Eternity, in the Unity of the Godhead.

Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, pag. 465. lin. 2.

"If it (i.e. the Word, *ὁ λόγος*, "which we translate of One Substance with the Father) be understood "to signifie--One Individual Substance,

¹Ibid, p. 11.

"this will be properly-- One Sub-
sistence, or One Person only.

Letter to Dr. Wells, pag.47.1.10.

"Now this, I say, (viz. That
"in the Godhead there are Three
"Persons of the same Divine In-
"dividual Essence) is an express
"Contradiction in the very Terms.

Answer to the Author of some
Considerations, p.224 1.12.

"If the Father, the Son and the
"Holy Spirit, be conceived to
"be All but One Individual Being;
"it follows of necessity, that the
"Son and Holy Spirit have no
"Being at all.

Ibid. pag. 289. lin.8.

"That Two Persons should be
"One Being, is (I think) a
"manifest Contradiction.

Ibid. pag. 297. lin.4.

"This (viz. That the Father
"and Son are Both but One and
"the Same Individual Being) I
"think, is an express Contra-
"diction.

N.B. That the Words Essence,
Being, and Substance, are used
 by this Author as equivalent
Terms, vid. Scripture-Doctrine,
pag. 243, lin.1 and 9. Pag. 270
#XII. lin.2. Pag. 272. lin.2.
Pag. 289 #XIX. lin.2. Pag. 349
#XL. lin.2. Pag. 350 #XLI, lin.
2. Pag. 372 #LI. lin. 3. Pag.
373. lin.19.

Answer to the Author of Some
Considerations, p.229.1.9.

Scripture-Doctrine, p. 429.1.10.

"There are not--Three Eternal

"Persons..

Ibid.lin.17. "There are not--
"Three Uncreated Persons.

Ibid.lin.penult. "There are
"not--Three Almighty Persons.

II. Passages tending to perplex the Minds of Men in the Solemn Acts of Worship, as directed by our Established Liturgy.

All the Passages before-cited have, in Our Opinion, this Tendency: More particularly those whereby the Author pretends to explain some Expressions in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, which are Parts of our Divine Service.

Of the like Tendency are his Comments (Scripture-Doctrine, Part III. Chap. II. pag. 415, etc.) upon divers other Expressions in the said Creeds, in the Doxology, Litany, Collects, and other Offices of Devotion. In which the Church manifestly intends the Worship of the Trinity in Unity, and ascribes one and the same Glory to the Three Persons, without any Difference or Inequality.

But the most Offensive Passage under this Head, seems to be in pag. 476 of said Book: Where having first connected the proper Preface for Trinity Sunday with the Words, O Lord (Holy Father) Almighty, Everlasting God, without taking notice that the Words (Holy Father) are expressly order'd to be omitted on that Day; He afterwards asserts, that the first, obvious, natural and

"grammatical Sound of the whole sentence, is, that the Person of the Father is not One Only Person, but Three Persons. Which Proceeding of this Author, is not only a manifest and gross Misrepresentation of this particular Form of Devotion, but tendeth greatly to perplex the Minds of Men in the Use of it, by insinuating, that whilst they are here acknowledging the One God to be Not One Only Person, but Three Persons in One Substance, they are all the while addressing themselves to the Person of the Father singly, and absurdly declaring Him to be Not One Only Person, but Three Persons.

III. Passages in the Liturgy and XXXIX Articles, wrested by Dr. Clarke in such Manner as is complain'd of in the Representation.

For these we refer to the whole Second Chapter of Part III of the Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, compar'd with Page 24 and 25 of the Introduction. In the said Second Chapter, He explains many Passages in the Liturgy and the Articles, in a Sense directly contrary to the known Sense of the Church; and in the Introduction He desires it may be observed, that he gives his Assent to the Forms by Law appointed, in That Sense Only, wherein He himself hath explained them."¹

¹Ibid, pgs. 18-23.

Clarke replied to this extract in a letter to the Bishops, bringing out the point that none of his propositions or interpretations of texts had been proved false or erroneous. He held that the objections were entirely based on some explications of metaphysical words not found in Scripture, and that the interpretation of these words had been debated by men of great learning for many years. He believed that the furor caused by the Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity was quite unnecessary, as out of the total of over five hundred pages, the only parts the clergy had found with which to disagree were some sentences from the Athanasian Creed, which were rendered in a translation to which they could not agree, and one sentence in the first part of the book from the Nicene Creed.

Clarke went on to point out that the word "one" in English is ambiguous, meaning both one in kind and one in number. The Greek word, *ἑνός*, however, always denotes one substance in kind, not number, and it was in this sense that he understood the word when he formulated his opinions: same individual substance would be rendered *ἑνότης*, he said. Clarke quoted the Council of Nicea and several writers of his day in support of his position, maintaining too, that to say

that the Father and the Son are of one individual substance is Sabellianism, and therefore, un-catholic.

Daniel Whitby, (1638-1726) agreed with Clarke, saying that the Son is a real Person, distinct from the Father, not of one and the same individual essence. His contention was that to have the same essence was to have the same will, but that he believed to be untrue.¹

Waterland, (1683-1740), on the other hand, said that a person is an intelligent agent having the character of "I" "thou" "he", and not divided into more intelligent agents who are capable of the same. He continued, saying that all persons but the three divine Persons are divided from each other in nature, substance and essence, but the three divine Persons are undivided, do not have separate existence, and therefore are but one substance divided into intelligent agents.² Jackson interpreted this statement as meaning plural in number: three substances (acting) and three agents, distinct, though not separate or disunited.

Clarke objected to Waterland's statement, as he maintained that many Supreme Gods, even though in the

¹Whitby, Last Thoughts of Dr. Whitby, p.5f.

²Waterland, Works, Vol. 1, p.97f.

same substance, were more than one God. To this objection, Waterland answered that the union of three persons does make them one substance, but not one person, the unity of substance and person being two different things. He further asserted that one MUST distinguish between essence and person. The confusion of essence and person--numerical and individual essence--lies at the root of Arianism.

For Clarke, it was quite unnecessary to examine the metaphysical manner in which the Son and Holy Spirit derived their Being from the Father, as the Scriptures make no attempt to do so.¹ However, he did go so far as to say that "The Son (according to the Reasoning of the Primitive Writers) derives his Being from the Father, (whatever the particular Manner of That Derivation be,) not by mere Necessity of Nature, (which would be in reality Self-existence, not Filiation;) But by an Act of the Father's incomprehensible Power and Will."² Clarke was of the opinion that John 5:26 intimated this, and that most of the ancient writers, with the exception of Athanasius, were embracers of the same point of

¹Clarke, Scripture-Doctrine..., props.13 and 21.

²Ibid, 3rd ed., prop. 17.

view.¹

This point was quite thoroughly controverted, but once again Waterland may be used as the spokesman of the opposition. He maintained that Clarke did not understand ecclesiastical language very well when he could speak thus, and argued that Clarke misinterpreted the meaning of the words when he understood by $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta\ \phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\chi\eta$, and $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta$ ² the same as he (Waterland) understood by necessity of nature. God is good by nature, exists or is God by nature, ($\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\iota$ or $\chi\alpha\tau\acute{\alpha}\ \phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\upsilon$) and generates the Son by nature.³ Jackson held that the Son is generated by an act of the Father, and Waterland was in error to deny this. He further contended that there is inseparable substance without identical life.

The clergy objected to Clarke's saying "Three Eternal Persons" et cetera, in his translation, but Clarke replied that in adding the word Persons to the phrase, he had obtained a more correct rendering of the Latin or Greek forms of the Athanasian Creed than he would have if he had omitted the word.

¹Clarke, Reply to Nelson, p. 113.

²Clarke, Scripture-Doctrine..., p. 251f.

³Waterland, Eight Sermons, p. xix.

In his Answer to the Author of Some Considerations etc. Clarke put forward the opinion that the Son and the Holy Spirit must have Being or else be only modes or powers of the Father. Clarke did not agree with the statement that the Son was mere man in whom God revealed Himself in some extraordinary manner, nor did he agree that the Holy Spirit lacked Being--that they were of the same substance with the Father.

Clarke countered the point the clergy had brought up about confusing men at worship by remarking that they had omitted any reference to the exact place and way in which he had caused such confusion. Clarke earnestly believed that the opposite was true: that he had clarified and simplified many points in this doctrine for the majority of the people.

The next challenge that Clarke answered was concerned with his inclusion of the words "Holy Father" in the liturgy for Trinity Sunday, when it was forbidden to include them. His reply was that the brackets were there to indicate that the words were to be omitted, but that the notation in the margin directing this omission had been inadvertently missed out.

In answering the clergy's last points, Clarke stated that no man can assent to any idea to which he

has not given adequate thought, coming only after due cogitation to the conclusion that he is in agreement with the idea.

Before closing this letter to the Bishops, Clarke remarked that the clergy nowhere showed that he spoke in a manner known to be opposed to the Church of England, and that, though the Lower House had set forth its objections clearly, the members thereof did not point out anything specifically heretical in his writings.

"Upon the Whole; 'tis with great Submission represented to your Lordships, that the Author of the Books complained of, has made it the constant Endeavour of His Life to promote the Knowledge and Glory of God, and the Interest of the Christian Religion, by all His Actions and Writings: And therefore 'tis humbly hoped, the Author will not be thought capable of having had any other Design in the Books now complained of."¹

Thus Clarke stated his position to the Bishops, and Lawrence informs his readers that this brief was set before some of the illustrious body, but never before the group as a whole. Instead, one week later (July 2, 1714), Clarke laid another paper before the House. In this paper he set forth his views on the Trinity as

¹Ibid, p. 41f.

briefly as possible, accepted the admonition of his peers, and apologized for his behaviour and for having caused the Lower House such consternation.

After reading this paper, Lawrence wrote to Clarke to point out that the enemies of "the cause" would think that this paper to the Bishops was a recantation of his views. Clarke wrote back to put Lawrence's mind at ease, telling him that he would not go back on his stated views. All that the paper to the Bishops was meant to convey was that he did not support the position of Arius (that the Son of God was a creature, made of nothing just before the beginning of the world). To make sure that the Bishops would be under no misapprehension about this, Clarke wrote to them again on July 5, 1714 to clarify his position.¹

At this juncture, the Upper House was satisfied and willing to let the matter drop. The Lower House was not at all satisfied, however, as Clarke had neither given satisfaction for the great scandal occasioned by the books, nor recanted from his heretical assertions.

An admirer of Clarke published Remarks on the

¹In Observations on Whiston's Historical Memoirs ..., p. 62, the author says that Clarke agreed with neither the Orthodox nor the Arians, and that he never recanted or retracted his own position.

Extract of Particulars laid before the Bishops by the Lower House, in which his main contention was that by thus complaining, they were acting in an anti-Protestant fashion. As the Protestant Church holds that each individual has the right to interpret the Scriptures for himself, how could a Protestant synod complain in this manner about Dr. Clarke's interpretation?

This then is the record of the case as it came before the Convocation, but it did not end the controversy. Clarke had not recanted or retracted any of his views, and therefore the second and third editions of Scripture-Doctrine... were published in due course, in revised form.

Before the complaint had been taken to the Bishops, Edward Wells had challenged Clarke. On the 30th of May, 1713, he wrote Remarks on Dr. Clarke's Introduction to his Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity. The reason Wells gave for confining his remarks to the introduction alone was that someone else had done an adequate piece of work on the remainder of the book. This was Knight's True Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity; a book Clarke felt to be rather an inferior choice for a man of Wells' learning.

In answer to Clarke's letter suggesting

that he might have made a better choice, Wells admitted that he did not entirely agree with the True Scripture-Doctrine..., but, in his opinion, there were some good ideas in it.¹

One point he brought forward was that Clarke wronged the Church when he accused it of requiring ministers to accept the doctrine of the Trinity advanced by Popish schoolmen to support their views on Transubstantiation.

Clarke's reply shows that his polemical skill was superior to that of Wells, and he succeeded in pointing out his adversary's defects, as well as those of the author of True Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, although in the opinion of many he failed to vindicate his own position. He also shows here a decided bias against Church authority.

When Wells wrote a second letter to Clarke, he apparently did so in a spirit of irritation, conscious of having given his adversary some advantage. His remarks have the air of something written by a petulant child who has failed to get his own way. He said that he wrote against Clarke's introduction, and if Clarke

¹Wells, Letter to..Clarke...in Answer to his Letter to.Wells.

felt that it (the introduction) was of any use, he should defend it; if not, he should not bother the world with it.¹

Clarke did not respond to this letter.

Robert Nelson made several pointed statements about the object and tendency of the Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity in his Life of Bishop Bull. Nelson was of the opinion that Clarke argued against himself when he said that the Son and the Father are co-equal, having the same divine nature without diminution, and yet asserted that the Son is subordinate to the Father. Nelson also was convinced that Clarke had not dealt fairly with the writings of Bull, reading into them meanings that were not there to begin with, when quoting from the Bishop's works. To this Life of Bishop Bull, Nelson prefixed an anonymous work, now known to be from the pen of James Knight. This work was entitled the Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity Vindicated from the Misrepresentation of Dr. Clarke.

In it, reference is made to the dangerous tendencies of Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine..., as well as to the unsoundness of some of his principles. Knight

¹Wells, A Second Letter to the Rev. Dr. Clarke ..., p. 6.

selected forty texts from more than twelve hundred that Clarke had chosen and discussed, showed that the principle of interpretation of these forty was erroneous, and maintained that the whole book was thus pervaded by error. His main objections were:

(1) that Clarke held that whenever the terms one and only God are used in Scripture, they refer to God the Father and exclude the other persons of the Trinity.¹ Nelson too took issue with this point, saying that Bishop Bull, in his Defense of the Nicene Faith, showed this idea to be contrary to the mind of the Catholic Fathers.

Clarke's response was that though it might be true that Bull had indicated this, he was still not in agreement. Clarke then illustrated from Scripture his reasons for maintaining his own position. He said that when God is styled One God, the Son, in subordination to Him is excluded, not from being truly God, but from being that person. The Son is God only through communication of the Divine Power and Dominion from the Father.²

¹Clarke, Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, Proposition IX.

²Clarke, Reply to Nelson, p. 50. See also Scripture-Doctrine, props. IV and XII.

(2) that Clarke uses being and person synonymously. This interpretation might be made of Clarke's first and thirty-third propositions in Scripture-Doctrine ..., yet in his Reply to Nelson,¹ he said that ἕως, or Unus, as found in Matthew 39: 17, signifies one Person, not thing or being as Knight has interpreted it. Again, Clarke referred to the Father as the Supreme Being, Self-sufficient Being, Intelligent Being, and in proposition two,² referred to God the Father as the Supreme and First Cause, with whom a second divine person has existed from the beginning. This is the evidence. Another idea that may be found rather paradoxical, but a question for the reader to keep in mind is: does it matter whether Person and Being are interchangeable words? To Clarke Person meant intelligent agent or intelligent being,³ and his follower, A. A. Sykes, maintained that an intelligent being would have to be a person of separate substance from all other intelligent beings. This he asserted to be true of the Persons of

¹Clarke, Reply to Nelson, p. 39.

²Clarke, Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity.

³Ibid, prop. 1. Also quoted by Jackson in Examination of Nye's Explication etc.

the Trinity too.¹

(3) that Clarke infers from the terms self-existent and unoriginated, that which is derogatory to the true divinity of the Son. He here refers, no doubt, to propositions five, six, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen and seventeen, all of which speak of the Father as alone self-existent, or of the Son's derivation from the Father. Daniel Waterland would agree with Knight on this point, as he declared that Clarke and his followers made of the Son a finite creature of precarious existence, dependent on another, by denying the necessary existence of Christ.² Even though Clarke stated in proposition fourteen, "They are therefore equally worthy of Censure, who either on the one hand presume to affirm, that the Son was made (ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων) out of Nothing; or on the other hand, that He is the Self-existent Substance."³ Waterland continued to be convinced of this fact. The Roman Catholic, Hawarden, joined his voice to that of Waterland, and the duet sounded

¹Sykes, A Modest Plea for...Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 12f.

²Waterland, Supplement to the Case of Arian Subscription Considered.

³Clarke, Scripture-Doctrine....

abroad that the Son, as Clarke described Him, could be annihilated by the Father at will. They were therefore in total agreement with Knight: Clarke judged the Son to be a creature.

By this time, Waterland had labelled Clarke and his followers Arians even though in their works they had been outspoken in their denunciation of Arians. The name of Arian carried with it a bad connotation, but as so often happens, the vox populi consistently proclaimed the title thus offered, to help them in THEIR denunciation of this group which has been called Arian ever since.

Gastrell (1662-1725) voiced the same opinion in his book, Remarks Upon Dr. Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity. Within the covers of this volume, the oft quoted, oft plagiarized statement "in Dr. Clarke's 55 Propositions, there is but one single expression, (viz. Proposition 27.) which any of those who now profess themselves Arians would refuse to subscribe to"¹ may be found. Gastrell summarized the controversy in a concise manner, and of all the men arguing with or against Clarke,

¹Gastrell, Remarks Upon Dr. Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 4. No matter how true this may be, it is a weak argument, as it does not consider whether there are not as few to which the "orthodox" would object.

his were the clearest and best arguments, with no time wasted in exchanging abuse or casting uncalled-for aspersions. Gastrell had the rare quality of strict adherence to the argument and its proofs.

Clarke found in Gastrell's work a repetition of the objections advanced by both Nelson and Knight, but he felt that the spirit in which it had been written was so excellent, and the argument handled in such an able way as to require an answer.

The accusation of being an Arian he answered with the retort that an Arian is one who tries to force the ideas of Arius on others, not one who, like himself, wants to adhere to the ancient and Scriptural ways of speaking of spiritual things. He found the name Arian to be one of dislike, and claimed that as Gastrell's ideas were closer to Socinianism than his were to Arianism,¹ he could also use a label of dislike for Gastrell.

¹Colligan (op. cit.) says on p. 51, that Dr. Samuel Clarke did not bring Arianism into England, as he expressly disavowed Arianism in proposition sixteen of Scripture-Doctrine.... The identification of his book with Arius' system seems to have originated on March 9, 1719, when a tract called "Arius Detected" was circulated in Exeter. However, he continues, it was Waterland who gave the word permanent association with the Clarkean movement when he wrote his pamphlet "Arian Subscription". Much of the Clarkean opposition came, therefore, from the people's acceptance of the customary appellation, and ranking it with Arian Christology.

The line of thought here is also rather childish. Clarke seemed to feel rather virtuous at refraining from calling Gastrell by a name with a stigma attached to it after being thus called himself.

During the same year, John Edwards (1637-1716) published his Brief Critical Remarks on Dr. Clarke's replies to Nelson and Gastrell. This book was written as an attack on Clarke's skill as a critical theologian, Edwards being obviously amused to find Clarke using metaphysical terms after he had condemned so heartily the use of metaphysical arguments on the part of others. He too found fault with Clarke for not quoting the Fathers as proof for his statements, disagreeing with some of Clarke's translation from Latin and Greek also. Another of his objections was that Clarke maintained that *θεός* is used in Scripture as a relative word of office. That is wrong, said Edwards, as it is an absolute, a word of essence rather than of office. Edwards' final word of condemnation was that Clarke denied the divinity of Christ and was therefore an idolator, holding the Son to be a mere creature. It is not the purpose of the writer to argue any of the points, but it is necessary to point out that, reading no further than Clarke's second proposition, one may ascertain that he DID believe in the divinity of

Christ, no matter how far from the truth he may have been in other matters. Any person writing anything down ought to be convinced of the necessity of approaching the subject with less prejudice than Edwards seemed to bring to his discussion of Clarke.

This was not the first time that Edwards had written against Clarke, In both 1712 and 1713, he had accused Clarke of being both a Socinian and an Arian, trying to disprove the divinity of Christ, and making Christ subordinate to the Father. He said that although Clarke nowhere expressly referred to the Son as creature or renounced His Eternity, he, Edwards, was sure that that was what Clarke meant.¹ Again, if Edwards had but read beyond the first proposition in Scripture-Doctrine, he would have found that Clarke spoke out definitely FOR the eternity of Christ in several of his propositions.

Edwards was not alone in his confusion as to whether Clarke was a Socinian or an Arian. "T. D."² said that although Clarke almost copied the "Fratres

¹Edwards, Some Animadversions on Dr. Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 45.

²This "T. D." may have been Thomas Dawson, as the Post Script to this essay has many passages identical to those in Dawson's book, Passage in the Dedication of.. Suspira Sacra....

Poloni" verbatim when he wrote the Scripture-Doctrine, he refused to be ranked with the Socinians,¹ and yet only five pages further on, he accused Clarke of wilfully corrupting the writings of the Fathers of the Church, making them patrons of the Arian heresy which he had revived. This had been done, according to "T. D.", by omitting parts of sentences which, had they been allowed to remain, would have entirely altered the meaning of the thought.

Edward Welchman said one thing to Clarke's credit although on the whole he condemned the Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity. He maintained that Clarke was not an Arian as he had said that the Son was not made.² Welchman agreed with many of Clarke's propositions, but not with those asserting that the Son was not of the same essence with the Father. Welchman used the last three pages of his book to collect material concerning Clarke's ideas on the Trinity by questions and answers, taking the latter from the Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity and Clarke's Reply to Nelson. It is quite a good summary which is worth quoting in toto.

¹D., T, Free Thinking Proved Atheism, p.59f.

²Welchman, Dr. Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine... Examined, p. 10.

" A brief Explication of Dr.
CLARKE'S Doctrine of the Trinity,
by way of Question and Answer,
from the Dr's own Writings.

Q. Do You believe there is a
Trinity of Persons in the Unity
of the Godhead?

A. No; for God is but one Person.
Christ. Doctrine, pag.241..

Q. What do You then believe con-
cerning the Trinity?

A. I believe that together with
the first and supreme Cause
or Father of all things,
there have existed from the
beginning, two divine Persons,
that is to say, the Son and
Holy Spirit. Script. Doctrine.
pag. 242.

Q. What do You mean by the first
and supreme Cause, or Father
of all things?

A. I mean the first Person of
the Trinity, namely, the
Father, who alone is the only
true God. Reply to Mr. Nelson,
&c. pag. 57, 60, 263.

Q. Is not the Son also true God?

A. The Son is by nature truly
God, as truly as Man is by
nature truly Man. Reply, pag.81.

Q. What are the essential Char-
acters of God?

A. The first, and of all others
the most essential Character
of God, is his being Self-
existent and unoriginated.
Reply, pag. 92.

Q. Doth this Character belong to

" the Son?

A. No; This Character is peculiar to the Father. Reply, pag.81.

Q. How then can the Son be by nature truly God, since he wants the first and most essential Character of God?

A. He hath true divine Power and Dominion communicated to him, which alone is That which makes God to be God (in the moral or religious sense of the word) ὁ παντοκράτωρ, supreme over all. Reply, pag. 81, 301.

Q. Is the Son then παντοκράτωρ or supreme over all?

A. The Son hath true divine Power and Dominion over all things, both in Heaven and Earth, but in Subordination to Him who alone is absolutely [ὁ παντοκράτωρ] of himself supreme over all. Reply, pag. 81.

Q. Since the Son is truly God, and the Father the only true God; how is it that the Scripture saith, There is but one God?

A. Because the Power of the Son, is it self the Power and Authority of the Father communicated to, manifested in, and exercised by the Son. Script. Doctrine. pag.332,333.

Q. Is not the Son of one Substance or Essence with the Father?

A. No. Scripture-Doctrine, pag. 465.

Q. How can two Persons,

" essentially distinct from each other, be but one God?

A. I tell You o'er and o'er, They are one God, because They have but one Dominion and Power. Which, tho' it makes two distinct Beings, each of them, God, makes but one God. Scripture Doctrine, passim.

Q. What is the Holy Spirit? Is he God?

A. I dare not say he is; for he is no where call'd God in Scripture. Script. Doctrine, pag. 303.

Q. What is He then according to Scripture?

A. He is a Being, of whom greater things are spoken, and to whom higher Titles are ascribed than to any Angel, or other created Being whatsoever. Scripture Doctrine, pag. 302.

Q. Upon what account do you Honour God?

A. Not upon the account of his Essence or Substance, to which no Honour is due, but upon account of his Dignity, Power, Authority and Goodness. Scripture Doctrine, pag. 373.

Q. What Honour is due to the Father?

A. Absolutely supreme Honour is due to Him, and only Him. Scripture Doctrine, pag. 352.

Q. Do You not pray to the Son?

A. I pray and pay all Religious Duty to the Father, through the Mediation of the Son. Scripture Doctrine, pag. 365.

"Q. Is not the Son then a proper object of your Prayers and Praises?

A. All Prayers and Praises must be primarily or ultimately directed to the Person of the Father only. Scripture Doctrine. pag.354.

Q. Do You pray to the Holy Ghost?

A. I have neither Precept or Example for that, either in Scripture or primitive Writers; yet I think it reasonable to desire of Him such Gifts, as it is His Office to bestow. Scripture Doctrine, pag. 375.

This is a fair, though short, Representation of Dr. Clarke's Doctrine of the Trinity, and it appears to me, as it must needs do to every considering Reader, so full of gross Contradictions, not only to the Scriptures, but even to it self, as no one surely will offer to reconcile, but He that hath attempted to reconcile the Doctrine it self to the Liturgy and Articles of the Church of England."¹

Van Mildert chose as one of the ablest answers to Clarke, Edward Potter's A Vindication of our Blessed Saviour's Divinity, Chiefly against Dr. Clarke. College Chapel talks given by Potter were collected and published in book form under this title. Potter examined Clarke's

¹Welchman, Dr. Clarke's Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity Examined etc., pgs. 30-32.

objections to the creeds and the Articles of Faith imposed by human authority, progressing from this point to a "true" Scriptural view of the subject. A great part of the book was a didactic treatise with no reference to Clarke's books or pamphlets. He stated that if the question of Christ's divinity were settled, the controversy would end. This would mean that all were agreed that the Father and the Son are of one substance, and Christ begotten of the Father by eternal generation as a necessary emanation from Him.

There is no extant answer to Potter, Welchman or Edwards. Indeed, Edwards said in his second treatise that Clarke apparently could not answer his accusations, as he had not replied.

One of the next tracts to appear was written by R. M. (Richard Mayo) and was called A Plain Scripture-Argument against Dr. Clarke's Doctrine Concerning the Ever-Blessed Trinity. In the preface, Mayo set forth his aim: to correct the pretence of Scripture doctrine found in Clarke's book, and to offer a plain Scripture argument illustrating the truth that the Christians had been taught. The main point of argument was once again that concerning the subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit to the Father. Mayo said that there were no

other beings inferior to or dependent on the Supreme Being, who were also independent, able to claim divine titles or attributes, or to whom worship belongs. This had been declared by the Supreme Being Himself, and therefore the Son of God to whom divine titles and attributes DO belong must be a distinct Person from both Father and Holy Spirit, but in the same essence. He is not only of the same essence, as a matter of fact, but the same substance. Thus, said Mayo in summarizing his own position, the One Eternal God is three persons in one essence or substance.

Knight too said that there are three real persons in one substance.¹ The persons have one substance, power and eternity.

Clarke and Mayo had much private correspondence on the subject before Mayo published it. Until this juncture, Clarke had not been arguing with Mayo, but had been trying to set his own ideas into the proper framework to demonstrate his position clearly to Mayo. After the correspondence became public, Clarke answered with A Letter to Mr. R.M. In this letter, the whole correspondence which had been carried on by the two men was

¹Knight, Letter to Clarke from Author of..., p.7.

summed up, and then Clarke drew his conclusions. These were all recapitulated in one sentence: Mayo's argument would simply amount to Socinian Doctrine. (There is no other Trinity than the Trinity of names: the one Supreme Father bearing, at different times and in different respects, the different characters or titles of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.) Clarke was certain that this was not Scripture doctrine, and just as certain that Mayo would agree with him, but either Mayo based his argument on a false premise or proposition, or his conclusions were Socinian.

As may be seen from the controversial material mentioned above, the Scripture-Doctrine was severely scrutinized and had aroused no little dissatisfaction. It had been examined fully and the main points had been successfully refuted, but Waterland was not satisfied. In 1719 he published his Vindication of Christ's Divinity Being a Defence of Some Queries Relating to Dr. Clarke's Scheme of the Holy Trinity in Answer to a Clergyman in the Country. In the preface, he gave his reasons for entering the controversy. The Queries he had drawn up a few years previously, at the request of a friend, not for publication, were supposed to point out to a Clergyman in the Country the errors he had fallen into by

accepting Clarke's views. This Clergyman and Waterland were unknown to one another, and they carried on quite an amicable and lengthy correspondence, until the clergyman (John Jackson), published this correspondence.

Waterland was perturbed by this proceeding, as he had not been consulted in the matter, and he was also astonished when he was told that any other correspondence relating to the subject in hand should be published. In response to Waterland's irate questioning, Jackson replied that as the papers had been seen by others, thus not being private at any rate, they might just as well be circulating openly. He had published them anonymously, and Waterland would not have been compelled to own to his share in them.

Van Mildert was under the impression that Clarke used Jackson as a tool, and that when he found that it suited his purpose better to write per alium rather than per se, he was able to speak through Jackson. For this reason, he asserts that Clarke had a great share in the composition of Jackson's answers to the Queries.¹

He went on to say that if anyone regretted the publication of this controversy, it was Clarke, as his

¹Van Mildert, op. cit., p. 57.

reputation steadily declined from the time Waterland was drawn into the argument, and Waterland's grew steadily greater. As Waterland was the one who attached the name of Arian to the Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, after entering the verbal arena, thus linking Clarke's views with others that were most unpopular, this might very well be true.

As for the Queries themselves, Van Mildert claims that they were so clearly and unequivocally drawn up that they seemed almost to suggest their own answers. The texts and the Queries founded upon the comparison of them, are arranged under distinct heads and exhibit a striking contrast to Clarke's system as well as to that which was the standard of the Catholic Faith. In answering them, Jackson at times evaded direct and distinct answers. Van Mildert called this "an attempt to mislead the reader, which Waterland has not failed to expose in the fullest manner."¹ Once again the main point deals with the supremacy of the Father. It was maintained that the Arian distinction between the absolute and relative Deity had no foundation in Scripture: no difference may be found in Scripture drawn

¹Ibid, p. 59.

between God and the SUPREME God, and therefore if the Son is not God in the full Scripture sense of the word, He cannot be called God at all. If He be God in this sense, then He must be one with the Father or else there would be a duality of Deity. This being the case, all attributes, power and worship must be the same. There is nothing that is half way between essentially God, and the creature of God. That there is some subordination of the Son to the Father may be granted if it is a subordination of nature admitting of no inferiority or inequality, but the Son must be considered both eternal and consubstantial.

Most of the polemicists would admit to a supremacy of order, Waterland himself saying that by mutual assent, the Father is supreme, the Son acting as mediator as befits a Son.¹ Whether this is orthodox or not may be decided by the reader.

Clarke was in full agreement with any person claiming that the Son is eternal, and his reply concerning the consubstantiality of the Son may be found in his Reply to Nelson.² Here Clarke maintained that the article

¹Waterland, Second Vindication of Christ's Divinity, p. 23.

²Clarke, Reply to Nelson, p. 35.

found in the Nicene Creed saying that the Son is of one substance with the Father means something different to the modern from what it did to those who wrote the Creed. The cause of this discrepancy was the ambiguity of language. Clarke believed that the interpreters of his day took it as if it were ~~ταυτόριον~~, or one Individual substance, whereas "all learned Men know" that the word ~~ὁμοούσιον~~ never meant that at all. It meant, he said, same Kind of substance with the Father. He believed that when the Council said that the Son was ~~ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς~~, it meant from, not of ¹ the Father, a common translation in his day. He interpreted it as meaning, therefore, not of the dust as is man, not of the individual substance of the Father, but from the substance of the Father. Clarke may be quoted exactly on this point, from his Scripture-Doctrine.

"Very God, of very God; begotten, not made, being of one Substance with the Father.

Deriving his Being from the Father in a singular, ineffable, and incomprehensible manner; so that no man can presume to say of Him, as they do of the Creature, that he was (~~ἐξ ἰνδυντων γενόμενον~~) made out of Nothing, or (~~ὡς τότε~~ στε, ἐν ᾧ) that there was a Time

¹Waterland, Second Vindication..., p. 12.

"when he was not.

The word δυσόμοιος, which we translate of One Substance with the Father, is a Word not found in Scripture; of great Ambiguity; and much harder to explain intelligibly, than any of the Expressions which we meet with in Holy Writ. For if it be understood to signify (as the Schoolmen generally understand it) one Individual Substance, This will be properly [not μία ὄσια, but μία ὑπόστασις; not δυσόμοιος, but μονόμοιος or δυσὸμόμοιος] One Subsistence or One Person only: Which can scarce intelligibly be distinguished from the Notion of Sabellius and Marcellus, or That for which Paul of Samosat was condemned at the Synod of Antioch. But if, on the other side, it be understood to signify one Substance, not individually, but specifically; (which is the more proper and natural Signification of the word, δυσόμοιος; and in which Sense it was understood by Many, both at and after the time of the Council of Nice;) This will be manifest Polytheism, or Plurality of Gods, by introducing more than One Self-existent Substance. Again, if the word be understood otherwise, as signifying [not, one Substance, but] one Essence; in That sense also, strictly and metaphysically taken, 'tis plain it cannot be True: For a Person who is not Self-existent, cannot, without a manifest Contradiction, be said, strictly and

"properly, and in the metaphysical sense of the Phrase, to be of the same Essence with a Person who is Self-existent, and of whose Essence That Self-existence must of necessity be a principal Character. It remains therefore, that the word ὁμοῖος, [Of the same Substance or Essence with the Father] be interpreted according to the plainer and less metaphysical Expressions and Notions of Scripture; that the Son is The Image of the Invisible God; that he is the Brightness of His Glory, and the express Image of His Person; that he is His Son, and his only-begotten Son; having been with Him from the Beginning, and having had Glory with him before the world was; deriving his Being from him, in an incomprehensible and unspeakable (because not revealed) manner; being the Word of God, and Himself (by ineffable Communication of Divine Powers and Dignity) God: God, not Self-existent, (for That is manifestly both a Contradiction in itself, and repugnant to Scripture,) but God in every sense, in which Divinity can be derived from Him which is Unbegotten, to Him which is Begotten."¹

Returning now to Waterland's Queries, we may find that he adds to his discussion of this a discussion of the inconsistencies of the Arian hypothesis.

¹Clarke, Scripture-Doctrine, 1st ed, p.464ff.

Waterland's biographer is naturally in favour of Waterland's methods and reasoning rather than Clarke's, finding his system clearer, and seeing much virtue in his use of texts from the Old Testament in the study of the Trinity.

Clarke's answer to this book was The Modest Plea Cont'd, and as The Modest Plea had been written by Clarke's friend and associate, A. A. Sykes (1684?-1756), there is some ground for the hypothesis that Clarke had had a hand in the composition of this too, as well as of Jackson's works.¹

The argument to be found in Modest Plea Cont'd was that Waterland did not refute Clarke's points, and that he had grounded HIS arguments on metaphysical opinions of the Fathers, rather than on Scripture.

In remarking on this, Van Mildert pointed out the fact that twenty-four of the thirty-one arguments advanced by Waterland were based either on Scripture, or on Clarke's own propositions, and that Clarke was attempting to refute Waterland's exposition of Scripture.² He sums up his own argument by admitting that Clarke's

¹See Disney's Life of Sykes, p.88, and Memoirs of Jackson, p.55. Also quoted by Van Mildert.

²Van Mildert, Life..., in Waterland's Works.

answers to Waterland were subtle and acute, but that the insuperable difficulty Clarke had to contend with was that of allowing the title of God to Jesus Christ. His thesis was that Clarke always added some expository word to the text when the Son is referred to as God, or expressed it in some round-about way, in order to obtain the shade of expression he desired to have. If the term in the text meant the Father, Clarke would add Supreme, thus making Christ's divinity seem inferior to that of the Father. Clarke had to have his interpretation of the texts fit into his system; namely, that there is a supreme and a subordinate God. Waterland's Queries tend to show that this is not consistent with the true Scripture-Doctrine of the Divine Unity or Trinity as understood by the Church or as professed to be received by Clarke himself.

In his Defence, query number five, he charged Clarke with maintaining a dualism, one superior and one inferior God, but none-the-less, two Gods.¹ Clarke replied that there was but slight difference between maintaining his view, and changing to Waterland's in which there were two supreme Gods. However, it may be said

¹Waterland, Works, Vol.1, p. 57.

to Clarke's credit that in speaking of his idea of subordination of the Son to the Father, he qualifies his statement enough to take the sting out of it. In proposition thirty-four, he said:

"The Son, whatever his metaphysical Essence or Substance be, and whatever divine Greatness and Dignity is ascribed to him in Scripture; yet in This He is evidently Subordinate to the Father, that He derives his Being, Attributes and Powers from the Father, the Father nothing from Him."¹

Although Clarke did support the thesis of a supreme Father and subordinate Son, it cannot be said that he disbelieved in the Divinity of Jesus Christ. It is also true, that much of the trouble Clarke seems to have tried to avoid was concerned with the possibility of being accused of owing to a plurality of Gods; a very present danger in all Trinitarian debate. He must have feared this and also the danger of relegating Christ to the dominion of human beings. His whole scheme was an attempt to elucidate a doctrine which is most difficult of comprehension, in an orthodox fashion. Unfortunately this scheme failed to the extent that his fellows gave him the name "Heretic."

¹Clarke, Scripture-Doctrine, 3rd ed.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of the examination of this controversy, all polemic was compared with a hammer beating upon the metal of ideas on the anvil of God's word. Although this is an adequate simile for polemic in general, an individual debate may be rendered more vivid by a comparison with music.

A musical theme is made up of sounds which are formed into a pattern, against which may be played other sounds or themes. The harmonies which result may be pleasing to the modern ear, or may produce a jarring dissonance, but the main theme, in various forms, recurs throughout the work, binding the whole into a unity. In the same way a controversy has a main subject consisting of a pattern of ideas, with other subjects and variations of the main subject producing the harmony.

In our present debate, the subject was the elucidation in an orthodox manner, and for the ordinary person, of a doctrine most difficult to understand, that of the Trinity. Around this subject, or theme, Clarke wrote his fifty-five propositions, some of which were harmonious to the orthodox ear, and some of which were

discordant. Some of Clarke's followers repeated the theme as he had evolved it, some even repeating it in the same key by using Clarke's exact words. Others altered it so much that the original theme was scarcely discernible. Nevertheless, no matter how distorted it may have been, there underlay each part of the controversy the theme: what can be said about the Trinity?

As in music we find related themes, so in this controversy the related themes were manifold. First of all there was the Slaters' Hall controversy among the Nonconformists. Then there was the debate concerned with the manner in which Clarke read and interpreted the Scriptures and the writings of the early Church Fathers. The third related theme was the Arian controversy carried on among men who no longer realized where the suggestion for their theme had been conceived. The final main theme one can consider related was as far from The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity as the last mentioned, but did have vestiges of the theme. This was Unitarianism, which was conceived by Nonconformists who were influenced by Clarke's book.

It has been said that Beethoven could develop a theme in such a way that the result was unrecognizable but for the intermediate steps. So it was with those

taking part in this controversy. In some cases the subordinate themes had so much emphasis placed upon them that the main theme was momentarily lost.

It has been said that there were discordant notes in the harmony of Clarke's argument which caused men to call him a heretic. These were the propositions in which he denied that the Son and Holy Spirit are of the SAME substance with the Father, and maintained that they are of LIKE substance; where he put forward the opinion that the Son was in some way subordinate to the Father; and where he ventured to say that the Three Persons of the Trinity are individual INTELLIGENT BEINGS.

Just how heretical was he? In other words, how much discord was there between his position and that of the Church?

Upon questioning, the modern Anglican will tell you that there is no distinctively Anglican view on the doctrine of the Trinity. However, by reference to the Thirty-nine Articles, one may learn much about the views of the Church of England on this matter.

An interesting point is that although in article five, the Son and Holy Spirit are said to be "of one substance, majesty, and glory", article one states that there is but one God "without body, parts, or passions",

and again "in the unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." BUT, article four says that the Son took flesh, bones et al at His resurrection. The point is this: although in one breath the three Persons are said to be of the same substance, in the next, it is said that the Father has no human characteristics, and the Son had risen with all of them except sin. This last point is stressed as the reason why Christ can be mediator between God and man--He is both. Thus one may see that there is an inherent difficulty in expressing an abstract idea such as the Trinity in Unity without speaking in a paradox, or approaching some heretical view.

None of the Thirty-nine Articles makes any statement about the equality or inequality of Father and Son. In the second article it says that the Son is the Word, begotten from everlasting of the Father, of one substance with Him, and the very eternal God, who took man's nature in the womb of Mary, of her substance, thus joining two perfect natures: perfect Manhood, and the Godhead. And yet it is this question, with variants, that may be said to have been the crux of the matter between the Arians and the orthodox of the eighteenth

century. To put the matter in one sentence, we may use Hawarden's question to Clarke: "Could God the Father annihilate God the Son?" This was a well chosen question--Clarke himself had never given much thought to the matter, apparently, as he was amazed when it was asked of him. The fact that Clarke maintained that the Son depended on the Father for His existence caused the remark. None-the-less, his position differed from that of Arius in that Clarke believed that there was no time at which the Son and the Holy Spirit had not existed, and Arius held that there was.¹ It is for this reason, if no other, that one may say that the position Clarke held was only semi-Arian.

We must grant that Clarke believed the Father to be supreme, and the Son, in some respects--namely that he was begotten by the Father--to be inferior or subordinate to the Father. He was firmly convinced, however, that the Son was divine. He was just as certain that at the incarnation this divine Being--a real person--took our flesh, and became truly Man. Thus Jesus Christ, God and Man, became the mediator between God and man. Here Clarke is in perfect agreement with the Church.

¹See p. 27f above.

Again he is in agreement when he says that before the incarnation, Christ had existed with the Father who created and ruled the world through Him. It must be emphatically stressed that the only subordination spoken of or believed in by Clarke was that the Father Himself was unbegotten, the Son begotten, deriving all His attributes and powers from the Father, but otherwise co-equal and co-existent. Orthodox Churchmen have always spoken of the Father as unbegotten and the Son as begotten of the Father; therefore Clarke cannot be called to task for speaking thus.

In speaking of the Son and the Holy Spirit as having like substance with the Father rather than the same substance, Clarke became entangled with Orthodox views. The feeling was that by speaking in this manner he was destroying the divinity of both the Son and Holy Spirit. Clarke, on the other hand, was of the opinion that many of his opponents made Christ the Father Himself. This opinion would cause manifold difficulties. The mediatorial duties which Clarke felt should be given to the Son would, if Christ were the Father, be left to the Father. There was also the other view: Christ was made the human Jesus to the exclusion of any divinity, but the Father dwelt in this human being to an extra-

ordinary degree. According to Clarke, the logical outcome of these answers to the question would be that worship must be directed either to the Father dwelling in Christ, or to the man Jesus, and he believed both answers to be foolish, as the New Testament speaks of worship due the Father through the Son.

In addition to the evidences of orthodox views thus far given, one may find throughout Clarke's works, both stated and inferred, that he believed the Father to be immanent. The Arian point of view is that He is transcendent.¹

It is my opinion that although Clarke had some decidedly Arian opinions, especially as they were interpreted by some of his opponents, he does not deserve the full condemnation as a heretic. Many of his views were true to the orthodox views of the Church of England, but these seem to have escaped notice in the hue and cry occasioned by the few propositions which might give indications that an Arian had written them. It would seem that several of his opponents must have been aware of the fact that not all of Clarke's propositions were within the Arian fold, as some accused him at one point of being an Arian, only to call him a Socinian at another.

¹See p. 28 above.

Quick as some of these men were to condemn the Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity and its author, they were slow to see that in many cases their own ideas should have been appalling to the Orthodox.

I also believe that although Clarke may not have been entirely correct in his thinking on the matter of the Trinity, he did attempt to bring together some information that might help others in their thinking. Whatever opinions fell within the Arian category did so in spite of the fact that Clarke condemned Arian views, and in spite of the fact that he considered himself to be as close to the truth of the New Testament as he could be. Thus, although I cannot accept all of Clarke's beliefs, I cannot agree with those who would condemn him entirely as a heretic. Each person may have one or more heretical ideas, but that does not mean that there is no truth in his philosophy or theology. Many never have their heretical ideas uncovered. Some do. Some of these latter men are truly heretics. Others, like Clarke, are for the most part orthodox in their thinking, but are placed under suspicion by the small proportion of heretical notions discovered.

All theologians are agreed that language is inadequate to express the conception of the Trinity. It

is not only difficult to express it, therefore, but it is quite easy to do so in words which may be misconstrued.

"The Church does not claim to be able to define or explain all that Godhead means. All that is taught is that whatever Godhead means, all three Persons equally possess it."¹

If this is accepted as a true statement, one must reiterate that it is rather severe on any man, no matter how false his opinions may seem, to condemn his whole scheme because some of it leads one along the lines of a known heresy. Can any purely Arian doctrine, any purely Socinian doctrine, any purely Orthodox doctrine, be found? Undoubtedly, if Clarke had not been accused of being an Arian, he would have been classed with some other group of heretics, simply because of the lack of adequate means of expressing any conception of the Trinity. In all fairness to Clarke, can we label him as a complete heretic when his opponents found only two points, other than his interpretations of Scripture and ancient Fathers, with which to disagree?

Whatever one may believe about Clarke's orthodoxy, he may be looked upon as a devout Christian who attempted

¹Bicknell, A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-nine Articles, p. 66.

to do what many would shrink from doing in the fear of being labelled as heretics: he set forth a detailed treatise with the aim of clearing men's minds of false ideas concerning the Unity of God in the Trinity.

Thus, although much could be desired in Clarke's doctrine of the Trinity, and although he was not an original thinker whose writings are of perennial value, Clarke's work has been worth while if only to demonstrate to his fellow thinkers the inadequacy of speech for the most central of all doctrines of our Christian faith.

We now come to the place where we throw away another used hammer, and we find that the Anvil-God's Word is still intact. The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity and the controversy it aroused have served their purpose, but they could not destroy the truth of the existence of the Trinity in Unity purposely or accidentally.

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